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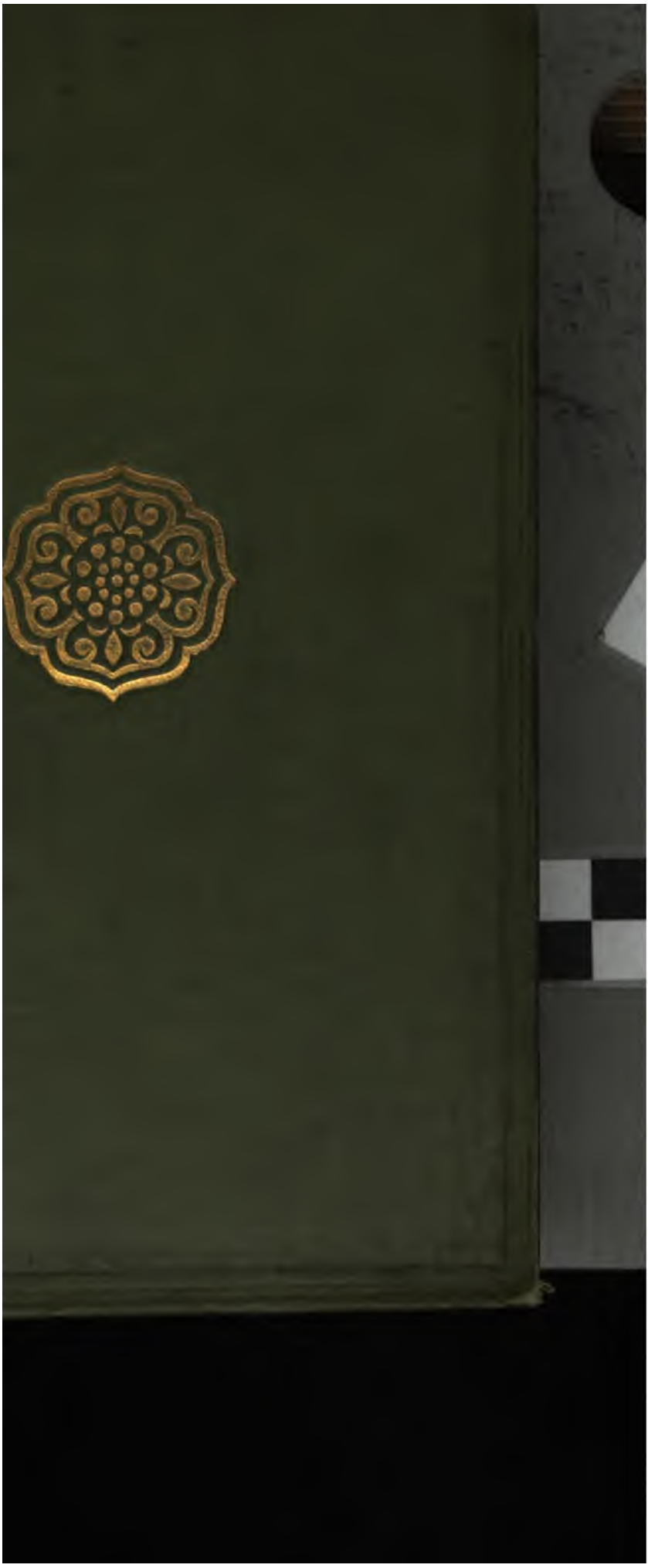

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THE TRUE STORY OF MY LIFE

Very truly yours
Alice M. Diehl

THE TRUE STORY OF MY LIFE

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY ALICE M. DIEHL
NOVELIST — WRITER — MUSICIAN

WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT

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PART I

EARLY YEARS

THE TRUE STORY OF MY LIFE

CHAPTER I

IF any human being—an important microcosm at the very least computation—were to give a truthful account of his or her past life, when it nears its natural end, it would and must be instructive, not only to educators, psychologists, and all who are interested in the improvement of the race, but to each poor unit of suffering humanity.

For humanity suffers—struggles—writhes through its short, petty years on this mysterious globe. Hours of peace, happiness, are the exception to the kings on their thrones as to the poor homeless tramps whose vices or lack of all natural virtues have sent them wandering aimlessly to their doom. There is only one panacea for all the miseries of life—WORK.

Workers fight the waves of trouble—first, in the beginning, buoyed up by hope. Hope grows into courage, courage into resignation; the practice of resignation makes them expert swimmers—they will never be drowned in despair. They will reach that

unknown goal "whence no traveller returns" to warn or encourage. They will die in peace.

As a worker from my very cradle to the years which must in the course of nature be my last, I give my experiences to all my fellow-workers; and as every creature alive is a worker, whether he or she knows it or not—some, alas! being very busily at work at their own destruction — I practically offer them to every human creature alive.

If the account of my life needed any further apology, I may add that I have lived in stirring times, and have seen startling changes and extraordinary events. My one endeavour will be truth—absolute truth. In the following pages there will not be the faintest shadow of that woeful and mephitic thing—a Lie.

* * * * * *

I was born in a small, white, creeper-covered dwelling-house in the Essex village called Aveley—a straggling street of cottages lying on a slope, in those days when only one or two great railroads were built, and people went their ways in coaches, or by sea and river. Aveley, then, was a peaceful, pretty place, with a peaceful, rustic population.

The Cottage, as it was called, had its gardens, back and front; its stables, outhouses, granary, poultry-yard, and fields for cows and horses and the cultivation of their food. Only a short lane, with fields on either side, separated it from the fine old Elizabethan mansion in the spreading deer-park called Belhus, the Essex seat of the owner of the land and houses—Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard.

Even in 1844, the year I was born, Sir Thomas was an old man. He had married a second wife at seventy, and had middle-aged sons and daughters by the first Lady Lennard. He was my grandfather's great friend in every sense—a handsome old gentleman of the courtly old school, somewhat short in stature, but with the gracious dignity of one with royal blood in his veins (the family dated from the reign of Charles the Second, and the proverbial Stuart beauty had descended to him in its fullness). It was curious to meet the two men in the park—my grandfather, a grand specimen of an old man, tall (six feet four), proportionately broad, with the carriage of a guardsman which he never lost, yet, with all his florid handsomeness, his snowy hair and shining blue eyes, lacking the peculiar distinction, the exquisite refinement, the courtly grace, of the little old baronet whose memory is still cherished and revered by all who ever came in contact with him.

My grandfather, Doctor Charles Lewis Vidal, was born in Jamaica in 1782. His father had inherited a fine sugar-estate called "Vidal's Prospect" from his forbears, the first of whom was one of the marauding Spaniards who, invading Jamaica, slew the men and married their wives. Stephen Vidal had many children, but without the slightest suggestion of Bluebeardism appeared to be a perennial widower. He never spoke to my grandfather of his mother, except to assure him that he was the whitest of the white, unblemished by even a suspicion of the dreaded "tarbrush." The tacit warring of black with white was, in that end of the eighteenth century, in its

extremest activity. A "coloured person" could hardly sit in the presence of a white man or woman. Slavery was in full force. My grandfather, as a boy, had two little slave lads for his own. He was a kind master, and they loved him—enjoyed being dressed up in a quaint, bright-coloured livery of his own invention, and accompanying him wherever he went. When he started a day's wandering about the estate, which was a large one, they ran on either side of his pony; when he wanted refreshment, climbing the cocoa-nut trees, bringing down the huge nuts, and preparing them for their contents, a rich, delicious cream, to be eaten with a spoon he carried tucked into his belt. Often, in the after years of his doctor life, he sighed for that ideal food for some poor patient to whom, were it attainable, it would be the greatest boon. . . . Often, in his later years, he talked with yearning regret of his two willing slave boys—one of whom pined away and literally died of grief when "young Massa went home in the big ship."

"Young Massa" went "home"—as the Mother-country is called by most colonials—when he was twelve, to a boarding-school fashionable in the days before public-school fever was an epidemic, where he remained until, at eighteen, his father, for some reason of his own, cut him adrift by the purchase of a commission in the Dragoon Guards and the payment of his patrimony—a few thousands.

This summary disposal of him was accompanied by a solemn letter of admonition as to his future. Whatever Stephen Vidal's own moral standpoint may have been, his epistolary preachments were morality itself.

His letters to his son Charles would have been a fitting contribution to some "Compleat Letterwriter" of that day.

Charles read that last letter, admired it, put it away as a sacred relic, and, speedily forgetting its contents, lived the gay life of the gayest of young dragoons; spent his money freely, was the life and soul of the mess, made friends joyously here, there, and everywhere, and found himself at the end of some eighteen months without a penny to bless himself with.

It was a shock. It sobered him and set him thinking. He could not remain in that regiment, that was certain. After consideration, he felt greatly inclined, by reason of his intensely sympathetic temperament as well as by a marked attraction to medicine and surgery, to qualify for the great profession of healing.

He gave a splendid farewell supper to his comrades —who little dreamt they were about to lose him—sold his commission, and began to "walk the hospitals" and study. He met with much kindness from his professors, and became the favoured assistant of the great surgeon, Sir Astley Cooper, whom he worshipped as the "very greatest surgeon God Almighty could create." But, even in those days, to qualify as a practitioner of medicine and surgery was a costly thing; nor was Charles Lewis capable of thrift in any shape or form. His necessary degrees obtained, he found himself without the wherewithal for the purchase of a country practice—his ambition—so he proposed to one of his young lady friends whom he had dallied with in innocent flirtation — because she was well

dowered—and, marrying her, looked about for a suitable future home.

Before any active steps could be taken, Charles' loving wife Ann became a sad invalid, and although his worshipped Sir Astley condescended to fight the dread enemy together with him, Ann succumbed.

She was fondly nursed during her last days by her bosom friend Martha, the plump, comely daughter of a well-to-do City merchant, one Butler. And to Martha Charles turned in his distress. Martha went down the long garden to a rustic arbour where Charles had retreated, hopeless, almost in abject despair, waiting to be called to witness his wife's departure to "another and a better world," and sitting down, tried to comfort him. But nothing—no pious suggestion of the kind, good girl who "sat under" an eminent City minister, and was Sunday-school teacher, district visitor, and what-not—had any effect. Only one thing would satisfy Charles: Martha's promise to marry him when "poor dear Ann was gone." Martha's sympathy for the shining-eyed and splendidly built young man overrode her first revulsion of feeling at such a proposition at such a moment. Eight months later she married the disconsolate widower, who never throughout his long life could exist without feminine admiration and companionship.

"Poor dear Ann's" capital, left to her husband, bought the Aveley practice, then in the market, and Doctor Charles, settling in a smaller house in the village until the cottage had been improved and enlarged by the willing Sir Thomas, speedily set to work to make friends, in a very few years building up

a fine practice which extended over a radius of twenty miles, and was the envy of the less ambitious practitioners who had not Doctor Vidal's exceptional gift of inspiring all classes with confidence.

Essex—or that part of Essex between Tilbury and Romford—was then liberally sown with squires and well-to-do "gentlemen farmers." Among his clientèle who "swore by him," my grandfather numbered the Lennards (at Belhus), the Whitbreads (at Purfleet), the Philip Buttons (at Stifford Lodge), the Mashiters (at Hornchurch), and hosts of other important members of the county gentry; while the Webbs (of Belmont Castle, Grays), the Ingrams (of Moor Hall, Wennington), the Francises (of Stifford), and other of the "gentlemen farmers" were, with the clergy and the officers at Purfleet, among his many patients. His practice leapt into figures almost unknown in that day; he was soon obliged to have an assistant, and a small stud of horses in the roomy stables built for him by Sir Thomas. His social attractions made him the welcome visitor as well as the cherished doctor. It was an agreeable corner of the world into which my mother came to the pair some ten years later.

Little Eliza (named after a favourite niece) was one of "the dark Vidals." The Spanish strain appeared in her olive skin and the beautiful dark eyes whose brilliancy was hardly dimmed when she died—at eighty-four.

An only, pretty, clever child, adored by parents, petted and extolled by their friends, the anxious care of nurses and governesses, her naturally imperious nature had no ordinary break to temper it. Every

wish was gratified as it arose, and when she mastered languages, science—as it was taught in those days—as well as music, and showed intelligent appreciation of political subjects rare in girls of that time, she began a triumphal progress through her teens. The favourite of Sir Thomas and Lady Lennard, and frequent companion of their granddaughters, she was the cherished girl-friend of Mr. and Mrs. Whitbread, who elected her the chief intimate of their nieces, the Misses Barton who lived with them, they having no children of their own. Constantly with them when they were at their house with the beautiful gardens at Purfleet, she visited them each year at their chief estate at Southill, where she met many of the great politicians and other celebrities of the day. Sir Francis Chantrey fell in sculpturous love with her mouth and chin, which he used in many of his works. He wrote himself her "affectionate friend," and told her many stories of his early life, which was passed in humble circumstances. Mrs. Whitbread, a somewhat irascible and decidedly autocratic dame, before whom her nieces trembled, and her husband, tyrannical though he was himself, sometimes fled in confusion, possessed the qualities appertaining to her defects in a conspicuous degree. She had the strong, assertive personality which, placed in any position of power, attracts all and sundry as honey attracts flies. She had tacitly adopted "Eliza Vidal" as her protégée. She was acute enough to see the possibilities of the girl, and she talked to her perpetually of the one aim in life—to attain to the position in which one may best use one's capacities for the general welfare, and one's own. With her, her

husband and nieces, courier and maid, Eliza Vidal made the "grand tour" in a coach-and-four driven by Mr. Whitbread, who was a famous whip. I possess the diary of this tour, kept by my mother by desire of Mrs. Whitbread, written in admirable, terse English, in an exquisite handwriting, detailing all they saw and the distinguished friends they met. I wonder, as I survey these records of the past, whether Mrs. Whitbread knew of the affection between my mother and her secretary, Mr. Harman?

As a clever, handsome young man, this Mr. Harman had been a constant visitor at Aveley Cottage when my mother was still a child, and as she clung to him admiringly as a clever child clings to such a seeming Paladin, he affected, and very likely felt, a considerable interest in her education. Education then, unlike the ordinary education now, included an extensive acquaintance with all sorts and kinds of literature. "Culture" was the watchword—there had been a semi-prophetic tendency towards "culture" before the girl-Queen came to the throne. But when Prince Albert dawned upon the horizon as a veritable apostle of mind and thought, the smouldering æstheticism burst into a perfect fire of dilettantism. Even those who did not really care whether they were *gebildet* (the German somewhat untranslatable expression) or no, posed as lovers of art and literature. It was a royal time for authors, publishers, newspapers, and, notably, for *The Times*, which the Prince was said religiously to read to his *Weibchen* every weekday of their joint lives.

Mr. Benjamin Harman was one of the head and front of the cultured, and he set himself to instruct

the neophyte Eliza until she should become a past mistress of æsthetics. He brought her books, superintended her studies, and read with her, teaching her as they went along. In the shady garden, "far from the madding crowd," the two, seated on one bench and poring over one book—an innocent Paolo and Francesca—fell in love.

Did Mrs. Whitbread know, and wish to rescue her protegée from a miserable love affair with a man who never meant, for some reason or reasons best known to himself, to marry?

Whether she knew or whether she did not, she had a match in view for Eliza, and from a worldly point of view a splendid one.

At Southill my mother was introduced by her to the Lord Scarbrough of that day—a bachelor over forty, red-haired and lame. He had taken a fancy to the pretty, brilliant Miss Vidal, and wished to make her his countess, with one stipulation—that she would be prepared to adopt two very sweet young godchildren of his, and without inquiry or demur to be a real devoted mother to them.

"If you do not accept, Eliza, you are a fool," exclaimed Mrs. Whitbread. "This is the one great chance of your whole life, and if you are so misguided as not to bless your lucky stars and jump at it, upon my word I will have nothing more to do with you!"

But Eliza loved, and firmly believed that the man she loved meant to marry her, enigmatical though his love-making was. That she scouted the idea of the red-headed Earl as she would have scouted a proposal on his part to put on wings and fly with him to the

moon will be understood by all girls and women who love—or who have loved.

Lord Scarbrough voted impossible, Mrs. Whitbread was angered for the nonce, but speedily forgave. Eliza, indeed, throughout her long life, showed that she had inherited that peculiar gift of her father's—to be allowed to offend only to be loved the better when the offence was at an end. She continued to visit Southill, and to be liked by the numerous guests entertained there during the shooting season—from royal dukes and well-known aristocrats and politicians to the artists and musicians of the day.

The years drifted away. The mysterious lover continued his visits to the Cottage, his tacit adoration, his readings and admonitions, but of any plan for a joint future there was no word or hint. At last there began to be questioning. Hints were cautiously administered by influential friends. The Doctor began to ask himself what he ought to do, and, being as proud as he was spirited, he sat down and wrote to Eliza's proprietary admirer, asking his intentions.

The answer came. The letter was given to me by my mother when I was a girl, and she was once more telling me the sorrows of her life. It is lost; but its contents are unforgettable. The man wrote his deep interest in Eliza, his affectionate concern in all that befell, or would befall her; also his great regret that anything he had said, or done, had been misinterpreted. He thought that most people were aware that for family reasons, which would, and could, never be altered, he was a bachelor, and would remain a bachelor till his death (which he certainly did).

The blow to my mother was severe. But she was proud, and her pride carried her through. Meanwhile, by her diaries and correspondence before and after this event, I have learnt how it changed a bright, joyous girl into a pessimist as regarded herself and every one else, for the remainder of her life.

Then came an introduction which was the opening of the hard, dry existence which she led from that hour to her very last.

CHAPTER II

AT Belmont Castle, Grays, lived a Mr. and Mrs. Webb. They had a beautiful young daughter, Jane, who, although my mother's junior by some years, had been from childhood her "bosom friend." In her teens she married a Mr. James Helme, then, even, a man regarded in the world of banks and insurance offices as of weight, and afterwards as a solid entity whose name alone meant wealth and security.

First taking a house at Whipp's Cross, the Helmes removed later to the fine old Queen Anne house at Walthamstow, where they both lived until their death.

This was one of those absolutely comfortable and hospitable mansions where the guests, although enjoying perfect freedom, are insensibly made to feel as if their company conferred a favour upon their hosts. To be genial host and hostess seemed this couple's greatest pleasure in life, while they had the most varied interests otherwise—politics (then always expected as the chief topic of conversation everywhere), art, science, literature. Their friends were among all the professions, yet "City people" of any notable value were always welcome.

Mrs. James Helme was a born musician and a great

Beethoven lover. (As, late in life, she took lessons of me in modern romantic works, I speak from personal experience.) Mr. Helme was also a fine amateur. They gave musical parties, at which the celebrities of visiting artists as well as those resident in England were glad to assist, and there were weekly quartet meetings. Artists who visited the Helmes would, after returning to their homes abroad, send compatriots with "letters of introduction." One of the musicians who brought an introduction to the Helmes was a young German pianist—a pupil of the then great man, Hummel—Carl Mangold, of Darmstadt.

The Mangolds had been *Kapellmeisters* to the grand dukes for over two hundred years. The first Mangold of Darmstadt was the brilliant but erratic Graf von Mangoldt (of the Saxony Grafs), who defied his father by marrying a girl not *wohlgeboren*, and who, proceeding to Darmstadt, claiming the help and patronage of his former friend the then Grand Duke, was elected his "chapelmaster."

But in those days the idea of caste was, in Germany, all-potent. A "von" must not earn his bread in such a fashion. Young von Mangoldt dropped his "von" and the "t" which belonged to it and subsided into plain Herr Mangold the musician. Meanwhile his sons and grandsons, musicians and painters as they all were, retained a haughty aloofness from the *bourgeoisie*. They intermarried constantly. Not only did first cousins marry, but uncles married nieces. The least evil of this overstraining of breed was that every boy Mangold became bald at twelve or fourteen and had to wear a wig. The romantic origin of the musical

Mangolds may have added to their musical gifts in the eyes of succeeding grand dukes. In any case, the Mangolds were in constant favour at court, and when this latest young Mangold had appeared successfully in Weimar under Hummel's auspices, the Grand Duke sent him, according to his wish, to try his fate in London, armed with a most pressing introduction to the mother of our late Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Kent.

This was about the time of the engagement of the Queen to Prince Albert. The Duchess received my father most graciously, and commanded him to give her constant lessons. She also played duets with him, and recommended him to the ladies she admitted to her acquaintance. Giving a concert under her immediate patronage, he was soon sought after, and before the year was at an end was in receipt of an income which went pleasantly into four figures. (Later on she commanded him to compose a "Triumphal March" to record the happy event of the birth of our present King. Still performed in Germany, it was coldly received in England.) As a minor musical hero of the hour, he visited the Helmes, and met, and fell madly in love with, Eliza Vidal.

My mother—just then in the first soreness of her love and life defeat—must have been flattered by the fatuous and unconcealed admiration of the young *virtuoso*, for later on Herr Mangold was visiting Aveley every week to give "Miss Vidal" music lessons. To these he voluntarily added lessons in German and German literature, over which he found many opportunities of pleading his cause, as I have

seen by "exercises" written by master and pupil, which he religiously preserved among his papers.

(I have always been of the same opinion as my father's guardian, the Kapellmeister Wilhelm Mangold, that his gifts were more philological than musical. He had been head of his class in the Conservatorium in Greek and Latin, history, geography, and literature; but when Wilhelm proposed a scholastic career, he took his savings, ran away to Weimar, and literally flinging himself at Hummel's feet, implored him to teach him, and hated his cousin-guardian for his depreciation of his musical ability ever after.)

The German lessons, the lingering in the garden until it was time to be driven to Purfleet to catch the last up-river steamer (the only public means of transit then between Aveley and London), led up to the first proposal of marriage, which my mother promptly and decisively rejected.

Carl Mangold struggled to work through his terrible depression for some few months; then the doctors sent him back to Germany, for serious symptoms of phthisis had shown themselves, and were attributed by the faculty to the humidity of our climate.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Jane Helme had been the recipient of his confidences, and had accorded him great sympathy. We women are not, in any case, good judges of husbands for our friends. Perhaps Mrs. Helme felt what Carl Mangold's men-friends well knew, that he was honourable, truthful, and in morals a perfect *Parsifal*. In any case, she constantly urged his suit with my mother—in my mother's own words, she "left her no peace"—and the result was that Carl Mangold

returned to England, resumed his rôle of desperate lover, and after wild resistance for a time on my grandfather's part, the curiously assorted pair were married in Aveley Church by the then vicar, Mr. White.

My mother must have been a quaint, pretty bride—her bunches of dark curls contrasting with her huge white silk bonnet with the bunch of orange blossoms and the nodding Marabout feather—her slight, if square figure tightly draped, in earliest Victorian style, in a watered-silk frock and shoulder-cape.

For the honeymoon the pair went to Darmstadt; and although her widowed mother-in-law received and entertained Eliza in a grudging fashion (Carl had kept his mother since his father died in a lunatic asylum a few years previously—facts my mother had not been told), all the eclectic professors admitted to the acquaintance of the Mangolds and the rest of their small clique, which included the well-known amateurs, Frau von Bechtoldt and her daughter (the latter was later a *persona grata* at the court of our Princess Alice), were charmed with the *Engländerin* and her many gifts. The society of clever, well-read Germans was a comfort to my mother in an otherwise trying honeymoon—trying, because my father had a sullen, morose temper, which was not soothed by learning the somewhat cruel fact that his adored Eliza had hard work to tolerate his passion. The return to England was welcomed by her, because it meant a return to work on her husband's part in the world, and work within the home for herself.

The young couple took an expensive house in Somers Street, a new street opposite the Park (now, I fancy,

renamed Albion Street), and prepared to increase Carl's small army of pupils and interested friends. But although the fashionable boarding-schools appeared to approve the fact of their young professor's marriage, private pupils fell off. The royal patronage, however, continued. Young Mangold was commanded to teach the Princess Mary of Cambridge, then a lovely young creature in the first bloom of adolescence, and as sprightly as she was beautiful. She evidently was, although greatly gifted for music, too vivacious to care for the plodding necessary for technique, and was also amused by the ceremonious gravity of her youthful teacher. He somewhat dreaded the rare minutes when the governess temporarily absented herself, for the Princess "chaffed" Herr Mangold, once jumping up and going to the window, saying she wanted to rest awhile. "What will you do now?" she cried in German. "You can't command me to come here, or go there!" "No, Princess," he replied, "but I can implore your Royal Highness to behave as a Princess taking a lesson from a helpless inferior." In a moment the Princess was back on the music-stool, the serious, obedient pupil. With her, laughter meant the effervescence of youthful happiness. A brighter creature never lived, nor a kinder or a more generous. My father never forgot her, and after his death she wrote to my mother that she had (after nearly fifty years) an "affectionate remembrance" of her old teacher.

The Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Princess Mary continued their patronage. But his Eliza did not bring her infatuated husband good luck. During that first year of marriage his princi-

pal school (Miss Shepherd's, from which he drew £300 yearly) ceased to be. Private pupils failed to resume their lessons. Meanwhile, my grandfather had made an insurance of my father's life for £4000 a condition, if he allowed the marriage. There were heavy sums to pay to the London Life Insurance Company (of which Mr. Helme was a director), as well as the income to be sent monthly to Germany to my paternal grandmother. My mother began her married life as the battle of fate in the matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, which continued until within eighteen months of her death at eighty-four. At the close of the year a son was born, and her life despaired of at the time, although once again the great Sir Astley Cooper appeared to fight for his old pupil's daughter, as, many years previously, he had fought in the case of his first wife. This time his patient lived, but the infant died at three weeks.

As soon as she had recovered, the Mangolds left Somers Street for part of a house in Marlborough Street, where, two years later, my elder sister was born. Each year Carl Mangold's income decreased. Leaving Marlborough Street for a house in a small square in Knightsbridge, the Mangolds found it uninhabitable through its established inhabitants—detestable insects which had multiplied their malodorous nests from cellars to attics—and made a sudden move to part of a corner house in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square—a dark, dismal dwelling in a black, close street, to which the pair brought me soon after my birth, February 25th, 1844, which occurred at my grandfather's house in Aveley.

CHAPTER III

FOR an art-loving, beauty-adoring child—as all children born to art-life must be, more or less—that dreary house in a dark London street was torturous.

Little wonder that during a long illness in bed I taught myself to read, and that before I was six years old I had read most of Sir Walter Scott and Bulwer Lytton, besides German romances—for I and my sister were taught German simultaneously with English and French, and my father always spoke it with us.

Literature was my first love. Painting, sculpture, music, fascinated, delighted, comforted me—sick as I was of the black hideousness of the fog-bound London of the mid-nineteenth century—but literature seemed to nourish my life.

At four years old I began to think in verse, and first dictating verses and stories to my nurse and sister, I was soon writing them for myself. I could also play, by ear, any music I heard that I liked—a reprehensible practice, be it understood, and one which for young people's good should be sternly discouraged.

The music in my parents' dull house was the only brightness. Our evenings—we were small children of five and eight, I and my elder sister—were spent

seated on stools in the big, dark, drawing-room, where, by the dim light of "composition" candles in brass candlesticks which required periodical application of the "snuffers" in the long brass tray always placed on the table in those days with any candlesticks, my mother read through *The Times* to my father, who lay extended on the sofa after his hard day's work.

To be taken to the opera—as I already was by my father when I was only just four years old—was like heaven after purgatory. Those were the days when a clever German company visiting England included Pischek, Formes, and many other now forgotten "stars" of that period, most of whom visited at our house, and astonished us children by their likeness to other ordinary folk.

Still, the winter, with its cold, fireless bedrooms and restrictions in diet—for my mother was always experimenting, and following each fad in the ideas of fashionable physicians as it arose—was dreaded by us to an extent the indulged young of the twentieth century could hardly imagine.

Spring meant for us migration to the country, to my grandfather's house in the quaint village, with the gardens and fields and horses and dogs, with the dovecote of tame pigeons, with the indoor and outdoor servants who welcomed us with acclamation and were our willing slaves.

My sister lived more among the "grown-ups" at Belhus, Mr. Whitbread's, and the other great houses where our mother had been so great a favourite. I had incidental friends; old Sir Thomas Lennard was the chief. But I had a curious experience with his land

steward, a Mr. George Parrott, brother of the R.A. painter, William Parrott, who lived with his sisters in a beautiful old-world house on the Belhus estate, which he managed.

We became friends through a somewhat odd incident. My days at Aveley Cottage were uniformly spent out of doors, in garden, fields, stables, and poultry-yard, where my great animal chum was a white and tan Alderney cow. I used to crouch up against her as she lay among the sweet-smelling hay under the shed, and read, dream, or doze while she chewed the cud. One day I had fallen asleep comforted by her fragrant warmth, when I was awakened by a loud "Hulloa," and looking up, saw above the poultry-yard fence Mr. Parrott on his big black horse. He looked amused. "What are you doing?" he said.

I heaved up a big book (the first edition of *Barnaby Rudge*) and explained that I had read myself to sleep.

"You had better come for a ride on my horse," he said. "Come home and have tea with us, will you?"

He did not speak as if I were a child (that miserable thing in inexplicable harness was my interpretation of the word), and, flattered, fascinated, I left the poultry-yard, and after humble advances on his part to my doubtful grandmother, was rapidly washed, clean pinafored and socked, and, lifted by him like a feather to his saddle, was riding off at an altitude to encounter new impressions and experiences.

In itself it was a vastly new experience to be conversed with on an equality. After I had revelled in the

splendid plunging canter of the huge thoroughbred horse, a transit through the air which fired my blood and gratified my starved senses, my new grown-up friend began to talk to me. From wanting to know why I read *Barnaby Rudge* and went to sleep "cuddled up against a cow," he asked leading questions, which I answered fully, honestly, because he had the wit to recognise I was not a child. (If I could have described my feelings, I could have said that every time any one treated me as a child they dipped me in the fire of hell.) Before we had made a very circuitous progress to the farm—he tried my nerve in various ways, by leaping and galloping and the rest of it—he knew more of me than any one knew, always excepting my *alter ego*, my grandfather.

His sisters, although I could see their surprise, which wounded me, received me very kindly, and indeed devoted themselves to the tiny unexpected guest their brother had sprung upon them. Possibly according to a hint given by him, they also treated me as on a level with themselves. Honeycomb was tasted by me for the first time at the dainty tea-table in the parlour with the quaint old furniture, and afterwards I inspected the beehives with Miss Martha, and we had an interesting conversation on the relative habits of bees and ants, until the big man with the monkeyish eyes, dark whiskers, and black hair appeared, drawing on his riding-gloves and saying we "must be off." He had promised to "return me" at such and such an hour. Then came a brief repetition of the plunging transit, this time simply through the village street, home in the gloaming.

Many a time and oft my visit was repeated. George Parrott would canter into the stable-yard, I would be called out, and without waiting for any toilette niceties he would lift me up, and we would be off, cantering to joy, for my hours at the old farm-house were a delight; there was always something new to see and talk about.

But through an error of judgment on the part of my big, dark man-friend, our delightful acquaintance came to a sudden and, to me, even at this day, unaccountable end.

One day I was fetched from the garden, where I was, as usual, in close converse with the gardener, Tyler, to find George Parrott *tête-à-tête* with my grandmother. It seemed—so I gathered—that these flights of mine to a new Elysium and back in company with Sir Thomas's land steward were objectionable to my grandfather. Whether the word "impropriety" had been mentioned I cannot of course tell, but my kind friend had evidently been irked into a very extraordinary humour. He appeared suddenly inspired with the spirit of burlesque. He began a long speech, asking me if I would consent to wait until I was old enough to marry, and then do him the honour of "accepting his hand and heart."

So extremely unpleasant—so intensely humiliating—were my sensations that I shall never forget him as he made that speech. For it was just my knowledge of my hateful youth which made all reference to me as the "child" I well knew I was so intensely obnoxious. As I gazed at Mr. George Parrott and listened to his absurdity, my liking for him fled. His imaginary

charms dropped away, leaving him as I then re
him to be, one of the ugliest of all the hideous m
of human creatures I was condemned to live amo

I said, "No." That was all. I said "No"
sistently. At last he had to go. I remember
stooped and kissed my hand, and I resented the touch of his wiry black beard or whiskers so violently that I should have liked my hand chopped off.

I was evidently in such a peculiar humour that nothing more was said to me on the subject until a letter came, repeating what Mr. Parrott had said to me personally.

Whether this was written as a gibe against my grandfather, who had annoyed Mr. Parrott by his objections to my wild rides at unexpected moments, I cannot tell. If not, it was an eccentric thing to do—to write an offer of marriage to a child under six years of age, no matter whether she was precocious in mind and brain or not.

I felt deeply outraged. It was only my grandmother's pleading that the right manner of treating the obnoxious letter was to consider it as "a friendly joke," and to answer it in a similar spirit, that induced me to write the reply she advised—to thank Mr. Parrott for his kind offer, which I could not possibly take into consideration on account of my extreme youth and inexperience.

I hated writing the reply as much as I hated the letter which compelled it. I hated the man who had occasioned both humiliations still more when, immediately upon the receipt of my note, by hand, he arrived on his black horse, and coming into the dining-room

where I was sitting with my grandmother while my sister practised in the drawing-room, said in mock-heroic fashion that my refusal had "flabbergasted" him. I heard the slang—common slang—expression for the first time. It was the finishing touch to the disenchantment.

From that hour I avoided any meeting with my hitherto kindly friend. A few years later he married a very charming lady of, I understood, French extraction. But while I often saw her, I contrived to evade encounter with her husband, who had so unwarrantably made a butt of me.

Another grown-up friend was an old sea-captain—Captain Sheppard. He had been, I think, in the merchant service, and, retiring, leased a small farm in the lane leading from the village to the park. I had then gradually contracted a habit of wandering out of bounds alone. When I was supposed to be in my usual haunts in garden or field, or stable or poultry-yard, I would creep through the hedge between my grandfather's fields and Captain Sheppard's and work my way across country, scrambling over ditches, laboriously climbing gates, skirting fields till I found gaps in the hedges I could creep through. When I quite lost my bearings I struck for a road, and if I did not come across a sign-post, would wait patiently for the first cart which happened to be going my way, when I would ask for "a lift." I always got it, and no one betrayed me at head-quarters. One day, however, Captain Sheppard intercepted me, and roared out, "Where are you going, you naughty child, you?"

"Where I want to go," I said, indignantly facing

him, and condemning his squat form, red face, large bluish nose, and somewhat blear eyes, as hideous.

"Well," he said, taking his pipe out of his mouth and spitting, "there's no mistake about it, you're a rum un."

"I am!" I heartily acquiesced, charmed at any name which was not as a rule applied to the genus child: a reply which, together with my odd appearance—a tiny creature, thin, in pinafore and socks, wearing a huge old white satin bonnet of my grandmother's, a point she had ceded because she thought the heavy headgear a good protection from the sun—tickled him until he rocked with a kind of slow, internal laughter. After recovering, he took a few more whiffs of his short black clay (I am sure of my details, the scene was photographed on my memory), and looking me up and down—his eyes had not a long journey either way—suggested that instead of "running over his fields," I should come and "see his garden over the way there."

I was only too pleased, for I had seen dovecotes and a tiny mill which had miniature sails turning in the wind, just like a real windmill, over the hedge as our nurse took us up the lane for sedate walks in the park, or when I had cantered past on my pony Daisy. Accompanying him, I found that reality, for once, equalled imagination.

"Great wits jump." In those mid-nineteenth-century days Japan was an unexplored country. But Captain Sheppard's ideas of a garden were identical with those of up-to-date Japan. He did not dwarf trees, it is true; but his garden of a couple of acres

was a miniature landscape. A wood of laurels and young firs had winding paths leading uphill to the Lilliputian mountain-top crowned by the pygmy windmill and miller's house. A little stream meandered through tiny fields, toy boats moored to its banks. Then there was an old-fashioned garden in miniature—small beds of tiny flowered plants, box cut into quaint shapes; looking down, it was like a picture suddenly come to life.

Then a small yard was a zoological garden seen through the wrong end of the glass. Tiny monkeys climbed short poles; guinea-pigs and squirrels inhabited little dens.

Captain Sheppard hugely enjoyed my evident admiration, and had another long, slow, inward laugh at my expense when his monkeys came readily and played with me, nestling in my arms and peeping quaintly round my big bonnet into my face.

"Lor! It's just as if the beggars knew you," he said, wiping his eyes with his blue cotton pocket-handkerchief.

I was not intending to furnish an explanation—Jocko and I being such friends, the monkeys doubtless detected his odour about me—and presently, having seen all there was to see, I allowed my offended dignity full play and indicated my intention to depart—my resentment at his inference that I was monkeyish prevented me from accepting his invitation to "come indoors and see if there was not some cake somewhere about."

I had my infantine revenge. As he let me out of the garden gate, growing still more purple-faced with his

inward chucklings, he asked "what I thought of his garden."

"What d'ye think of it, eh?" he said in a superior tone, after he had cautioned me to go "straight back home along the lane."

I looked up into his rubicund face and wondered what manner of man this was.

"I think—that your garden—is a rum un," I exclaimed, with a sudden impulse—and without another look or word I took to my heels and scampered home—fortunately, it was not far—for after the faintest attempt on my part to run, I had to sit down, often in the dusty road, to recover my breath.

Although we grew to be great friends, even mutual sympathisers, Captain Sheppard proved the undoing of my beloved wanderings.

One evening, late, after I had been incontinently, ruthlessly put to bed at a childish hour, I heard voices in the garden below, and creeping out and peeping through the Venetian blind, saw my friend the Captain seated on the other side of the small round table placed on the lawn every night for my grandfather, with the tray containing spirit-cruets and a huge glass jug of water.

Shortly after the confabulation of the cronies—they were winter rather than summer cronies—my wanderings were cut short by a remarkable manifesto on my grandmother's part.

She herself had been greatly irked by my disobedience in continuing to visit the "ladies next door" when she had forbidden me to do so.

"The ladies next door" were two very beautiful

women—either mother and daughter, or sisters—to whom my grandfather had let the pretty cottage, with a long garden, included in the little estate he leased from Sir Thomas Lennard.

Why my grandmother objected to these ladies I cannot tell. Their beauty and gentle kindliness strongly attracted me to them, and when "my morning calls" were objected to at head-quarters, good-natured Tyler would lift me in his big, brawny arms and deposit me over the hedge between the gardens, and I would visit them by the back door, retiring stealthily under cover of the pollard elms and the garden fence, through the stable-yard.

One day, soon after my acquaintance with Captain Sheppard, I was sneaking out of "next door," when my grandmother issued forth from the "front gate," and seizing my arm, dragged me into the garden with a wrath, real or assumed, I could not have credited her with. In her disengaged hand was a carving-knife.

"I have a good mind to cut your head off now, at once, for daring to go where you are told not," she said, in a voice I had never heard from her lips before. "But I will give you another chance! However, if you ever *dare* go in next door, or anywhere beyond the garden and your grandpa's fields, cut off your head I will. Do you understand?"

There was no doubt about it; I understood. Such summary vengeance subdued me—almost crushed me for the hour. I went about feeling my throat tenderly, for I really suffered pain, as if the very threat to cut off my head had physically hurt my neck.

Why the gentle, pious old lady assumed a character

she could hardly have imagined—how she came to act in this fashion, and why—how, indeed, she reconciled a speech which was an untruth with her sensitive conscience, I have never been able to explain. But this extraordinary manifesto of hers accomplished in an instant that which constant threats, warnings, lecturings, had failed to accomplish. I should as soon have thought of doubting the Bible itself—that book for which I had a consuming adoration and veneration—as my grandmother's spoken words. I never went to forbidden places again, and when a wild desire to wander seized me, the vision of the carving-knife stood between me and freedom, as I felt the flaming sword must have interposed between our first parents and the entrance to their lost Eden. I would clasp my tiny throat and pitifully repeat the words attributed, I think, to Lady Jane Grey, "My poor neck is very slender."

But this check upon my proceedings threw me back upon myself. At this time, certainly, I was working for the National schoolmaster, who came Saturdays to teach us writing and arithmetic, and liked his precision, neatness, and assiduous endeavours at regulation of my desultory ways enormously. I respected him for a certain carefully repressed enthusiasm, and although I hated "the multiplication tables"—the learning of which was my worst punishment for aggravated acts of disobedience—his quickness in releasing me from the initial rules and beginning with "long division" made me his respectful and obedient pupil.

Then I was reading Shakespeare—whose delights I had learned through the charming tales by Charles

and Mary Lamb—and, secretly, I was studying medical books, in the hope that they would help me to understand my grandfather's work. Still, with all these varied interests, I missed my free intercourse with the world without. I had haunted certain cottages—now interdicted; I had visited the blacksmith's wife, and helped her make cakes (hindered her cake-making was, I have no doubt, nearer the truth); I had taken tea with the baker's mother, who lived in a charming rustic cottage opposite the "National School"; and had visited cottages where babies were just beginning this mysterious life of ours, as well as those where the aged sick were preparing meekly to lay it down. But all these visits had been surreptitious, and between my entity and the surreptitious was now—the carving-knife.

The garden was no longer sufficient. Tyler, the gardener, had helped me in the construction of a garden about a doll's house—a miniature toy affair in imitation of Captain Sheppard's domain. But heavy rain had destroyed the tiny gravelled walks and reduced the flower beds to hopeless confusion. After some days of stormy rain and hail the garden itself was changed, and pacing its damp paths, I was once more beset by the inhabitants of what I called my "nether world."

My "nether world" was my abnormal imagination. Suddenly, seemingly from within me, beings would appear before my mental senses—for that the human mind has settled senses of its own apart from bodily senses I cannot but believe.

With my mental vision I saw persons who were not

any that I had ever seen with my bodily eyes or heard with my bodily ears. They were with me, and I knew their lives from the beginning. There was no need for them to tell me their histories. I knew all as I mentally encountered them. If these beings had been young, bright, life-full, ardent, they might have raised my spirits, exorcised my melancholy and loneliness. But they were mostly old, decrepit men. Hollow-eyed, wan, shrunken, they came to me seemingly aware of the fact that I knew all connected with their undoing and had unbounded sympathy for them. Some were learned, self-contained personages, for whom I felt considerable reverence. Others were merely what one might term the footballs of fate. They had been unfortunate from first to last. They were worsted. They were miserable, abandoned by all—hopeless and helpless.

They wrung my heart, and I could do nothing for them. One old man was very lame, and I would help him round the garden and try to interest him in the plants and shrubs. But he was more absorbed in the destiny of human creatures. That good old lame man was possessed by the idea that if only humanity would realise eternity, the race would win against the enemy of man. But when I asked him how and when—why and in what way—he was gone! I found myself standing alone on the path, a trifle giddy and very tired, staring at some tree or bed of cabbages, wondering "what it was all about."

A tremendous lassitude always followed my interviews with these odd creatures of my imagination. I learnt what both mental and physical exhaustion meant.

I would be found afterwards either crouching near the kitchen fire or in a big arm-chair in the sunshine—I was so cold, so infected with the deathly atmosphere about my mental acquaintances. . . .

Then occurred my first real taste of youth—childhood—the actual first stage of the *Ego,* as it should be, and I have never flinched in my gratitude to the being whose sympathy exorcised my mental tormentors.

The ladies my grandmother disliked had disappeared. The Cottage had been furnished by my grandfather, whose principal recreation was attending sales, and buying all kinds of goods and chattels, and was let by the week or month. A Major Bush was renting it—an army man either retired or on half-pay. He had a charming little wife, fair, delicate, and four or five children under seven.

The eldest of these was a boy—Tobin. He called at the Cottage with his parents. Although some few months my junior, he was much taller—a fair, fragile-looking boy with very round, pale blue eyes. He was wearing a dark blue poplin tunic, and a round Tuscan hat trimmed with yellow ribbon. I was asked to take him about the place and show him everything, and, I remember, obeyed with inward rebellion.

But my dislike vanished as I found that this was a very different child from the children I had hitherto met. It was a staid, courtly, refined little gentleman who accompanied me, in an amiable, slightly deferential manner, about my grandfather's domain. He showed a polite interest in the animals, inspected the poultry-yard, and visited the stables; but I saw that animals were not part of his young life as they of mine, so

hastened into the garden, where he unbent, and seemed in his element. To my astonishment, this child both knew and thought much, and could speak of what he knew or thought. Hitherto, children had "given me a wide berth." They had stared at me with round eyes, and had remained speechless and apparently discomfited. Out of doors they melted away from me, my sister with them. Indoors they would sit "mum-chance," as if frightened or offended, especially if I ever got so far in a mutual acquaintance as to probe them as to their ideas of what this life really was, what they meant to do with their future, and how they endured the detestable punishment of childhood.

Finding Tobin so different from any child I had met, even from my sister, who, the older she grew, seemed to have less and less sympathy with my life and longings for knowledge and maturity which might explain why we were on earth, and what it all meant, I was careful not to shock him at first. We talked of flowers and gardens; I told him of my experiences of ant-life, and he was interested in the book *Insects and their Habitations*, which he took back to read at his leisure. When we were summoned indoors at the close of the Major's visit, our talk had seemed five minutes to me, but had really lasted more than an hour.

My after-elation was a new emotion. I went out, consequently, in a fever of happiness, retracing our steps, remembering each word of this new kind of child, full of hope that the child-world I had to live in was not so absolutely idiotic as I feared. That night I dreamt Tobin and I were walking in a wonderful garden, hand in hand, and that I was telling him all I

felt, grieved over, longed for, and that we were in perfect sympathy. . . . When, the next day, I heard the click of the garden gate, and saw Tobin, quaint-looking, sedate, coming up the path, I felt an unusual thrill of anticipation. He had called upon me to improve our acquaintance, and once more we went about the garden. He was silent at first—preoccupied. At last he blurted out, "I dreamt of you last night."

"And I of you!" I said, wondering.

"Strange," he said. Then he looked at me queerly. "You write poetry," he went on. "I don't. I couldn't. I shouldn't know what to put. But I like verses, I like learning them. I will learn yours, if you will lend them to me."

Sympathy at last! That was the initial letter of an intense, devoted friendship which taught me the enormous value of friendship in the life of the mysterious unit called man.

It was a new existence for me; it was at least an evanescent taste of life's springtide which I never, precocity that I was, could enjoy in its fullness.

Everything was changed. I was changed. The hardness, the misery of being a child among the flimsy nothings children seemed to me was overcome by a subtle charm, a delicious sensation of well-being.

The garden seemed a paradise with my new friend wandering about it with me. This outspoken encouragement to me as an embryo writer, tempered with criticism ("That line doesn't seem right, somehow," would lead to a very necessary revision on my part) gave me courage.

Major Bush had a good nurse—a fine "strapping

wench" my grandfather would have summed her up as—dark, strong, but friendly. Luckily for Tobin and myself, our nurses chummed, we all took our walks together. Looking back, I wonder at what the fragile children of that day were expected to do. There were neither perambulators nor mailcarts. The tiniest and youngest must walk, there existed no other means of locomotion. Walking tried me. But in our wanderings—walks during which the nurses sang ditties of the day, we little ones joining more or less shrilly and feebly in the chorus—I had Tobin's arm to lean on when tired, and fatigue, while we were deep in our cogitations and speculations, was nothing compared to the heaviness, the weariness, of unbeguiled exhaustion.

The mind commands—governs—the body, even in its earliest stage, a fact those who hold the reins guiding infancy through childhood and youth into maturity do well to take into consideration.

CHAPTER IV

THOSE were stirring times, especially in France. The departure of King Louis Philippe—the *coup d'état,* and consequent disturbance and election of "the President of the Republic," as Napoleon the Third was called in those pre-Empire days—furnished a staple topic of conversation and argument in the English circles with which politics were a cult. My mother was absorbed—if I dare say so, excited—by the strange turn of events. It was a hard, dark, cruel winter. How I should have lived through it in the dismal house in Hunter Street I cannot tell, but for an extraordinary experience in early autumn.

Once more my father and mother took us, their two children, to Germany. On the way to Darmstadt they broke their journey at Cologne—and, after the weary hours in the railway-carriage, I was glad when they took us with them to see the "Dom" as they called it—the great, solemn cathedral.

I was tired—exhausted to a state of dreamy semi-consciousness. It was early evening. My parents were nothing if not energetic. They never seemed weary, always were ready for the, to me, difficult exercise of walking. I remember suffering greatly as I staggered over the cobbled streets on what must have been but a

brief transit to the cathedral from our hotel on the banks of the broad, flowing Rhine.

But, the old door in the narrow side street opened, I suddenly found myself in a new, dim world. In the deepening shadows the high arches looked like a vault in another, finer planet—one of the worlds I sometimes vaguely dreamt of and forgot when awake. I felt suddenly strong, alert, as one who has heard a sudden cry from a loved, lost voice, and as my parents went on, exploring, gazing, conversing, I stood where I was transfixed, motionless with awe.

For, as I stared at the red lamp opposite me which glowed like a huge, live ruby in the darkness, a light kindled in my mind—a warmth seemed to lift me into a strange, delicious joy—*I knew that where that light was, was God on earth.*

I sank on my knees, feeling that for the first time since I was born I was safe home.

I did not pray, I did not think, I did not feel—I *knew.*

Then, after that which seemed to me but a few moments, my mother came hurrying up, saying, "You naughty child; how dared you stay behind like that? You nearly frightened us to death. Do you know you might have been locked in all night?" The pain of feeling that she did not recognise the tremendous presence, that she could talk in a loud, commonplace tone in that place, was positive agony. I should have liked to die, then and there. The sequence of varied impressions was so overpowering an experience in strong emotion, that I never have forgotten, never shall forget, a single item of the night hour in Cologne

Cathedral which influenced my whole after-life. I remember that a black-veiled nun was kneeling near me in silent prayer, and as she glanced up at the sound of a loud expostulation in that sacred spot, I saw a little blotch of white—her face—and for one mad instant had a violent desire to throw myself down on the pavement by her chair and beg her to take me away and keep me. It passed. It was as if a cool, steady hand had been placed on my shoulder, and I was led, passive, calm, out of the building into the street. I remember that it was raining: it seemed to me as if the sky were weeping.

So strong was the feeling engendered by this episode that it changed me from a palpitating, nervous, passionate creature into something older, quieter. I took my further German experiences passively. The German relatives and friends were very eager and interested on the subject of my youthful verses and tales (I had written one or two verses in German, the language which my father always spoke to us to facilitate our practical knowledge of his beloved native tongue). With them, I believe, began the idea of publication of a selection from them at a near future date. In fact, I learnt late in life that a publisher—Mr. Lange, who had a house in New York as well as in Darmstadt—undertook to publish any MSS. of mine accepted by a London publisher.

The month's stay in the fair white town, then pure from the smoke of railways and coal fires, and still a very "garden city," with its stone houses standing in green, pleasant grounds that were sweet wildernesses of flowers, vines, and fruit trees, was pleasant enough.

We had young friends in the lovely children of one of the chief professors, Doctor Hueffel, and stayed, as before, at the house of his uncle, a retired professor and attached friend of my father's, Dr. Girsch. This old savant's dwelling, in the "Bessungen-Weg," had a lovely garden, first sloping uphill to a pavilion—a two-storied, verandahed garden-house, where we four little girls took our dolls and played at housewives—then downwards to the road, beyond which were harvest fields and the dark green forest.

There were excursions with the Langes to their paper-mill, a big establishment, where I was shown the paper my ideas were later to be printed upon in its various stages of evolution, and by the banks of whose swift-running millstream we picknicked—Frau Lange hacking hunks of brown bread from a long loaf, and chunks of ham from a substantial half-joint—while there was a stone jar of beer cooled in the running water for those who liked it, and the ice-cold water from a handy spring for those who didn't; drives with the Girschs and Hueffels into the mountains, and tea parties *ad libitum* at the Mangolds. The Mangold family's idea of entertaining was tea parties, where all was ceremony and reserve—and music—where the youth who would presently delight the family with his virtuosity on violin or flute or violoncello was all obsequiosity as with many bows he handed *Englischer Thee* to the ladies. (The so-called "English tea" was, in the early fifties in Darmstadt, an extremely nasty beverage, without a plea to excuse its existence.) At these parties I met the grand, handsome old great-uncles Carl and Paul, the latter of whom later on

espoused his niece, Betty Mangold. Then there was a far grander entertainment—luncheon at Frau von Bechtoldt's. Here her grown-up son, a handsome youth, appeared in his regimentals, made himself agreeable, and was quite the young *Offizier*. When, driving past "Prinz Carl's Palais" an hour or two afterwards, the sentry presented arms to us, we understood why young Von Bechtoldt had left us so soon after luncheon—for the sentry was himself! Military rule in Germany, like love, levels all!

Back in London, I began, in very desperation, to try to be interested in my mother's circle.

This was hardly equal in importance to that of Mr. and Mrs. Whitbread at Southill, where she had become intimate with great statesmen, who afterwards corresponded with the fascinating "Miss Vidal." But her new friends were clever, cultivated people. There was an American, Dr. Boott, who with his delicately pretty wife and lovely daughters lived in Gower Street, and entertained notables in science, literature, and art—writers, poets, and artists of the day—also his friend, Dr. Wallich, who also had a wife and daughters. Then Mr. Whitbread—Mrs. Whitbread, my mother's great friend, had died—came with his second wife, and Sir Thomas and Lady Lennard drove up weekly with the greatest regularity, Sir Thomas making his way laboriously upstairs to the drawing-room between his valet and his devoted wife. (The way the tall lady bent over her aged spouse always suggested a guardian angel to my mind, full of day-dreams of angels after my constant Biblical readings.) When the venerable descendant of the Stuarts left after a long visit he

would always say, as he said good-bye, "I have brought the little hamper, Eliza, my dear," in an almost apologetic manner, and he would slide a sovereign into our hands as he shook them in farewell, which we of course handed over to our mother in huge delight at being able to do something to help her, for already my heart at least had ached over her troubles, which she did not hesitate to confide to me—the shrinkage of my father's income, while the insurance money was still a huge sum to meet, her fears of evil days to come, etc.

Then last, but not least—for my mother had hosts of other good friends, among them Mr. Hertz, the great art connoisseur, and his family—there was the beautiful Miss Lygon, afterwards, when her father became Earl Beauchamp, Lady Georgiana Lygon, who later on married Lord Raglan, the son of the well-known General.

Lady Georgiana was a constant visitor, and after we were considered old enough, we were her frequent guests in Grosvenor Place.

Her deputy-mother—to whose care she and her eldest sister, Felicia, were urgently confided by their young mother, Lady Susan Lygon, on her death-bed—was a Miss Marks, the elder and more robust sister of my own always beloved godmother, Susanna Marks. Thus we children became of interest to one of the loveliest girls ever created, and, lover of beauty as I was, each time that we met, whether she came to see my mother, whom she evidently valued very highly, or we "spent the day" at Grosvenor Place, or joined the children invited to her parties, each occasion was like

a star in my memory. It was always there, shining, in the dull sky of my London life.

But there were stars in my mother's firmament which filled me with horror, disgust, and in some cases with the spirit of rebellion.

Susanna Marks, my godmother, was a staunch Anglican, following "the Oxford movement" in its extremest development. On the seventh anniversary of my baptism, she came, and presenting me with the most costly Bible and Prayer Book which could be bought, she talked to me most seriously. She seemed to have got wind of an anarchical religious spirit in my mother, and without knowing how I had already been influenced that memorable night in Cologne Cathedral, she spoke of the Catholic Church—the true Church which was born on Calvary—and of how the Catholic Church held fast and firm the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

I can see her now—a sweet-faced, attenuated maiden lady, dressed in exquisite, if costly, propriety—her thin face under her delicate lace cap transparent as alabaster—the soft brown eyes under her bony brows, girlish, sweet, eager, yet sad—the eyes of the saint she was.

Her visit roused my mother to a great bitterness which I only understood when she told me that "Saint Susanna," as she and my father (my father always either held the same opinions as herself, or echoed them) called her, had egregiously exceeded her privileges as sponsor at my baptism—that children belonged to their parents, and were bound to obey them in all matters, matters of faith included.

I knew that my father, instead of attending any church, spent Sunday mornings reading Klopstock, Herder, Zchokke's *Stunden der Andacht* and other works, nor did this strike me as anything peculiar, for the Lutheran Darmstadters, particularly the men, seldom deemed it necessary to attend the certainly long-winded, dreary services of their church. But when my father as well as my mother had fits of enthusiasm on the subject of the American divine Dr. Channing, and openly told us children that for the future we were all Unitarians, I might have correctly expressed my feelings if I had borrowed my old friend Mr. George Parrott's expressive adjective, and declared myself "flabbergasted."

I know I suffered anguish unspeakable, especially when my mother, stern and solemn, took us to the Unitarian Church, a bare, wooden building, where some man who had not the faintest resemblance to any Christian priest or minister I had ever seen, held forth a long-winded lecture I, in my sorrow of soul, never attempted to understand, from a rostrum.

No trouble I have had since—and I have had many—has equalled my utter misery in my parents' forcing this new creed they evidently believed in upon me.

Away from my grandparents, my mother asserted herself. She took no notice of my melancholy after that dismal induction to a new church. The following Sunday she produced Channing's Catechism, and gave it to us to learn.

The very first sentences—how the Lord my godmother had spoken of to me with bated breath as our Saviour and Mediator was "a man who went about

doing good"—were to me blasphemy, horror, the very fire of Hades. I then and there became one of the staunchest dogmatic Christians alive. So strong was my violently aroused faith that it was like iron in my soul. I said nothing. But I persistently declined to repeat that Catechism. My mother fought my decision. When I allowed the book handed me to drop, she picked it up, made me sit near her, and read me the questions and answers over and over, well knowing how I must remember them afterwards, even against my will.

I was passive. But when she asked me to repeat the words, asked me quite gently and even affectionately, I babbled "Anan."

(I had been dipping into Bulwer's *Ernest Maltravers*, and had been much taken by that frequent remark of my pretty, rustic namesake "Alice," when she could not understand.)

My contumacy was certainly enough to make my mother lose her temper. But she was admirably patient, returning to the charge Sunday after Sunday, when she spent morning church-time in endeavouring to inculcate Channing's ethical teaching. With my languid, obedient sister there was no opposition. But with her troublesome rebel, myself, she had at last to give up the personal struggle. She knew that, of late, I had clung to my sister more than to herself. So she chartered Etta to persuade me to learn the new creed.

When the day and hour arrived, my sister, always gentle and amiable—especially to me—told me "it had been arranged" that we were to study religion together

for the future. When I stared in incredulous astonishment, she began to coax and persuade, and talk platitudes of children's duty to parents, and how much more parents understood of what was good for their children, etc.

"Oh, you Balaam's ass!" I cried; and I flung myself upon the floor and began to bite my arms and wrists savagely. I bled; and my sister's screams, "Alice is killing herself!" brought up my mother in a scare.

That was the end of Dr. Ellery Channing's Catechism as far as I was concerned. A stray sermon from the six slim black volumes I detested would be read aloud to us sometimes on Sunday evenings instead of *The Times* leaders, which we were expected to enjoy on weekday nights. But there was no further active interference with my religious opinions, although I was then only six years old.

At that time Channing was my mother's star. There is little doubt about it, she was a hero-worshipper born. Sometimes her heroes were so-called "great men" who never would know, or hear of, their enthusiastic worshipper's existence; sometimes they were among her immediate circle of acquaintance. She certainly worshipped Channing, the renowned American divine, from afar, out of her obscure existence. His light was only extinguished when her enthusiasm was aroused by the Hungarian patriot, Louis Kossuth.

Kossuth had been declared "supreme governor" of rebellious Hungary, whose revolt against Austrian rule he had been head and front of in 1848; but when the armed Hungarians were routed by General

Hayman on August 10th, 1849, surrendering *en masse* a few days later, the agitator and ringleader escaped to the Turkish frontiers, later (either in 1850 or 1852) appealing in person to the English people in their refuge for refugees—England.

Splendidly handsome, of a commanding presence, gifted with an oratorical genius in many languages, there is little doubt but that Louis Kossuth was welcomed in the British Isles with open arms, making no less than a triumphal progress wherever he appeared. That this was the case, that he was a lion-in-chief of the many lions visiting our perhaps almost too hospitable shores, is conclusively proved by the fact that day after day the great Jupiter newspaper, which at that time was a monarch among readers, devoted not only columns, but whole pages to the republican Hungarian's speeches in various places. Evening after evening my sister and I had to sit quiet and listen to those interminable speeches, read aloud by my mother to my tired father, weary from a long day's travelling and teaching. He was an exemplary listener. I sat and watched him. Sometimes he dozed. But when my mother's voice betokened righteous indignation as her hero declaimed against the hated "House of Hapsburg" and its tyranny, he would murmur "Bravo!" "Fine!" "Splendid!" and dream again—let us hope, poor weary soul, of lands in better spheres, where Channings ceased to trouble and Kossuths were at rest.

Then came a new interest—the "Great Exhibition of 1851." All minor constellations beloved of the star-gazers were eclipsed by the sun.

In those days, when railways were in their infancy, when electricity was merely suspected, and when the penny postage had barely succeeded the days of eightpenny charges and "franks," such an event as the erection of a glass palace in Hyde Park for an International Exhibition was akin to the sudden appearance in the sky of some vast and alarming comet.

Looking back, the advance in quickness of perception, in judgment, and, above all, in common sense, of our race since those days is almost incredible, exceeding the advance of science, which, a greater item in the world's history, moves more slowly. There was far more childishness about people then. At every public event they clamoured their approval or the reverse; they behaved, so my memory tells me, more like disturbed colonies of insects than as an assemblage of units, each one responsible for his own feelings, thoughts, and ideas, as well as for his actions.

Every one—at least, every one I saw, heard, or heard of—talked of nothing else. The progress of the great glass building—the interest "Prince Albert" (the title of Prince Consort was not yet public property) took in it—why and how Sir Joseph Paxton had originated the idea of a gigantic conservatory—whether the nations would or would not send in response to the invitation to exhibit—and whether we should not, in spite of all the fine plausibilities held out, become the laughing-stock of the world—these were the topics discussed by the cultured set from morn till night, and night till morn.

The successful opening of the fairy palace filled every one with elation and pleasurable anticipation, and the doubters with relief. The season was a memorable

one. Foreigners and their money inundated London. Such a harvest had hitherto been unknown to hotel and lodging-house keepers, while all businesses must have felt the influx of outside, hitherto unknown, patronage. How the great scheme of mutual admiration of each other's products promoted peace—for long intervals, at any rate—among the nations, historians well know, also that to the gentle wisdom of the Prince, who has so richly earned his title of "Albert the Good," we owe the invaluable national event.

Even at this day so few live who remember that romantic, exquisite palace in the first bloom of its perfection that I may record my own impressions of it at first sight.

My grandfather had arrived to see the marvel together with his Eliza and his "pets," as he called us. More smartly dressed than usual, we accompanied our seniors in a "coach" to the park. On entering I felt as if walking into one of the wonderful places described in the *Arabian Nights*. Above towered the crystal dome. A tree (I think an elm) had been left in the centre of the floor—it was in full leaf—and the effect of the green foliage in contrast with the crimson, oblong banners bearing the names of the various countries ("Zollverein" predominating) was brilliant in the extreme. The effects of sunlight shining through the clear, bright glass upon the statues and finely arranged exhibits in each court, as well as in the transept and nave, were marvellous. No picture I have seen has succeeded in reproducing the rainbow-like hues which seemed to glow in the atmosphere within those glass walls.

To me the Italian Court was an impression which

coloured my life for always. I felt that I was seeing statues almost for the first time—or rather, that the maimed relics of ancient Greek and Roman work I had admired in the Museum were here, alive, existent once again. An ambitious work, the "Veiled Vestal," haunted me, sleeping and waking, for months afterwards.

"*The* Exhibition," as it was called, brought German friends to stay, German notabilities to visit. The well-known writer, Dr. Rellstab, stayed in Hunter Street, and was so charmed with my mother's intellectual conversation that he offered her the right of translation of any of his works. (She afterwards spent countless hours in writing an English rendering of one of these, but the English publishers shook their heads. Dr. Rellstab, honoured in Germany, had no "following" here.) Adolphe Henselt, composer, pianist to the Russian Court, a name familiar throughout the piano-playing world, and my father's fellow-student under Hummel in Weimar, came and played. Not in public. Henselt, semi-royal in birth, had the sensitive pride of the Bavarian family he so strongly resembled. He and the public were—well, not akin, not in sympathy with each other. Then he was the most capricious of capricious artists. If he had arranged to play certain works, the occasion arriving, he felt the strongest possible objection to perform the settled programme. He was *mal-disposé,* as the French term it. Any other pieces? yes; but those set down in black and white? No. Thus, doubtless, it was that Henselt was never heard by any prearranged audience at his best; and that fellow-artists who need not have remembered the facts

would say, "Oh yes! I heard Henselt that time he broke down in Vienna"—or elsewhere—for the musical autocrat would, if the whim took him to do so, spring up from the piano and stalk off the platform, leaving the audience to interpret the proceeding as they chose.

Henselt, at that time, was barely middle-aged—hardly tall, if well made—but with a bearing which suggested supremacy. Dark, with a clear olive skin and sharply defined aquiline features, the shining, luminous eyes under his level brows were simply magnificent. There are eyes in human heads which have far greater power, when directed towards their fellow-creatures, than eyes are generally credited with. Gentle eyes—eyes with sympathy in their glances—eyes commanding—eyes pathetic. But Henselt's eyes were as convincing as lightning. The most stolid of human beings flinches at a terrific flash of forked lightning. However passive, indifferent, dull to hebetude the person confronted with Henselt, a glance from those strange eyes, and that person would at least be roused, if discomforted, and wondering "what the matter was."

From what I afterwards gathered, Henselt, accustomed to a certain shrinking from him on the part of any children he came in contact with, was surprised at my anarchical audacity. I was not afraid of him—I feared no one. Fearlessly I sat on his knee, and talked to him in my elementary German—for neither then nor at any other time did he speak our language; and, after I had been roused by his splendid playing—for, shut up in our drawing-room he would play to himself, or practise, for hours—and, wild with delight

in his study "Si oiseau j'étais," played it in my old friend of a key, C major—I willingly clambered to the music-stool and played my parody when he desired to hear it.

"You must send the child to me when she is old enough," he said later, and my father promised, a promise fulfilled years afterwards.

At that time, and each winter previously, there had been quartet meetings in the big, dingy old Hunter Street drawing-room. The late M. Sainton, Signor Piatti, and the visiting stars among instrumentalists, would come and seemingly enjoy a musical evening. Even then I played trios or quartets with string accompaniment, but always when lesser talent alone was present. My father would hardly have asked Sainton or Piatti to take part when the pianoforte was presided over by a female infant of six or seven, although I am sure that, at that early age, I played and understood classical works, notably those of Beethoven, better than I have ever played or understood them since.

That "Exhibition year" I and my sister were deprived of our yearly six months' visit to Aveley, partly because the many German friends who succeeded each other in batches expected to see us children, partly because our nurse's assistance was required in the household, and without a nurse my mother would not have allowed us to stay under my grandfather's roof.

To me it was not a lost summer, for it introduced me to a new world of children.

Although we lived in a street leading out of Brunswick Square, Brunswick Square garden was for some

reason unavailable as a playground for us. But Gordon Square was then in its initial stage. The enclosure was complete, but not more than a score or so of houses were erected about it. The red-brick building "University Hall" stood alone on a big piece of waste ground; the "Catholic Apostolic Church" was not in existence. Facing Woburn Square, the big centre house was occupied by the then Master of the Rolls, Sir John (afterwards Lord) Romilly. One big corner house was the home of the Lush family; another was the residence of the Busks; while near the Busks lived the Mellors and the Ashmores. It was the residential quarter of personages of legal importance whose names were mostly destined to be landmarks in the history of English law.

The children of these various houses were of different ages, the eldest mostly barely in their teens. We—my sister and I—came into their midst strangers, but she, at least, was not a stranger long. She was as fond of cultivating strangers as I was of avoiding them. Soon acquainted with the little girls, she dragged me into the games, and made me play until physical collapse released me, and I took refuge on a seat and looked on.

I used to feel a lonely outsider and very sad sometimes, seeing them all running about, screaming, laughing, happy, and for some reason I could not supply, however deeply I fished in my mind for it, I could not mix with them. I was a drop of oil on the water, and should have become a perfect young cynic but for a couple of chivalrous boys who came to my rescue.

One was a fat little fellow about my own age who had always given me a broad smile if our eyes met—Fitzroy Ashmore.

I had not returned his friendly smile because I thought him uninteresting, commonplace, with his big eyes and pale, pendulous cheeks; and when one day he left the noisy young crowd who were playing "stones," and sidling up to the seat where I sat—I remember he strolled up, pausing now and then, and pretending nonchalance, before he meekly asked if he might sit by me—I retorted, "You had better go and play."

"I would rather talk to you," he ingenuously said. And his speech and manner were so in advance of his years that I unbent, and we became fast friends. He had not the intelligence of my lost friend Tobin, nor had he read so much. But he had sense enough to talk sense, and to take interest in the subjects I broached. Very soon we were friends, "chums."

But a boy appeared upon the scene who somehow resented the attitude of Fitzroy as my devoted squire. He was certainly a most beautiful child, the younger son of the house of Romilly, whom every one called "Hal." Bold, dictatorial, he seemed to take a special delight in ousting Fitzroy from his self-elected squiredom and assuming it himself.

Again I met a clever child. "Hal Romilly" was brilliant. When he talked with me, I had to rouse myself to keep pace with him. But he brightened and spurred me. He elected himself my champion. I was considerably looked down upon by the youthful crowd as sulky and sullen at the least—and too weak to be

taken into serious consideration at best. But Hal, bold, handsome, came storming among them. "Leave her alone, will you!" he cried one day. "I am going to marry her when I grow up."

Still, young Hal was too much a child to have much weight with the heterogeneous young crowd which disported itself in Gordon Square in 1851.

The mature—the old—do they appraise child-life aright? Do they recognise the fact that, if you throw a number of children of various families and breeds together, you will find a crowd of mature persons in embryo—there will be cabals, scandals, rebellions, and that without a head, numbers of recreating children will be a wild young mob of republican tendencies?

It was so in Gordon Square. The children did not fight physical battles. But they divided themselves into cliques, with weak imitations of leading spirits. I was the looker-on, so I know. But, suppose a revolution, you also suppose a leader. The leader arrived in the person of a tall, slim lad of about thirteen, the eldest (I believe) of the large family of Mr. and Mrs. Lyne, who occupied a big corner house in Hunter Street—a boy afterwards well known as the Anglican abbot of Llanthony, "Father Ignatius," then merely "Leycester Lyne."

Whether his family had previously held a key of the square I do not know. I only know that he arrived and at once made his masterful spirit felt.

He was extremely handsome. Indeed, he very closely resembled the engraving after Phillips's portrait of the poet which was the frontispiece to the first edition of Byron's poetical works in four small volumes. But

it was not his external appearance which made him the acknowledged captain of the childish crowd; it was his dominating power.

Arrived, he was at once master of the situation. He assumed the headship of the little colony. He pooh-poohed the hitherto popular games, and introduced those he considered better for the juvenile items—games in which all might join. While his lofty manner was kindly, he had a cold, scrutinising glance when practically reviewing the forces he meant to control which reduced the small personages inspected to a sort of nothingness. I know that I had never felt so small, so insignificant a trifle of human dust, as when Leycester Lyne looked me up and down and then promptly relegated me to obscurity for ever after.

There was little doubt but that order was very soon established in the square. We used to dribble in and disport ourselves as we pleased before Leycester adopted us. But after he dawned upon our fatuity we had regular hours—nay, minutes. We were to assemble at certain times, and to disappear—at all events from his ken—at other settled moments. He sorted us out, and after brief interrogations roughly classed us. He started the game which, I believe, is generally termed Prisoners' Base, but which he elected to call "Chevy." But as soon as he had established himself firmly as our acknowledged chief and dictator he showed himself in his true colours.

Hitherto the organiser of sports and pastimes had been Leycester Lyne at play. Wise as the serpent, he beguiled us before he set to work to doctor our souls as the future "Father Ignatius."

No sooner had he netted all his fish than he began to be the apostle instead of the fisherman.

One or two of his devoted boy admirers would be requisitioned to carry seats under and around a certain weeping-ash tree, and we would be ranged by him on these seats. We were already so accustomed to obey him that we sat respectfully silent while, after ringing a bell for a minute or two, he mounted the circular seat under the ash arbour, which completely hid him from any curious eyes peeping between the iron bars encircling the enclosure, and began to preach.

His sermons were clever and to the point, and emphasised the doctrines already inculcated by my godmother. I listened in admiration, and was incensed when my boy chums afterwards grumbled and secretly resented an infliction they would not have dared openly to object to—for Leycester had already shown the iron fist in the velvet glove. He would not scruple to box ears or to slap hands if necessary; and during the series of sermons which he resolutely preached once or twice weekly—on irregular days, lest his congregation should find methods of "holding itself excused"—he would reduce his auditors to a grovelling respect by stopping short in his discourse and directing energetic remarks of a reprobatory character at the offending member who might have yawned, or wriggled, or otherwise shown signs of being among the future goats at the Great Day.

The youthful, self-elected pastor of many lambs could hardly escape the notice of at least some of the sheep. The lambs went to their homes and prattled, and wondering ewes came out to see whether this extraordinary

youth might not possibly be a wolf masquerading in their own clothing.

Among the mothers who came to see what it all really signified, was my own. Already I had seen the great Leycester walking round the square with "grown-ups"—mostly anxious mothers—for the few nurses told off to accompany their charges quite approved his influence, notably the scoldings and slaps. My mother gave her superior sniff and impatient glance and smile when I insisted on her listening to my account of the young autocrat—this triton among the minnows—and dismissed the subject with a few subversive words. But she accompanied us to the square on several occasions after that, and I watched her walking round and round, Leycester at her side, tatting (he hated indolence, when he was "off" his self-imposed duties he tatted beautifully), in the throes of religious argument. She at once admitted that the future monk of Llanthony was a "clever lad." But later she went farther, stating that Leycester Lyne was "a remarkable youth who ought to be something great when he is a man, and gets over his Puseyite nonsense." I remember she spoke as if ritualism were a kind of spiritual measles, which only those who rigidly avoided infection were proof against.

The autumn came. Leycester had planned races, games, with prizes, and, to my great relief, he had allowed me to "enter" for a short race of all under eight years of age. It was a concession, for when I had been allowed among the rank and file at "chevy," I had done little but tumble about, once getting a sharp slap for having been "careless." The

day arrived. There were flags marking the course, seats arranged, even refreshments of sweets and fruit laid out among the little prizes arranged on a small table under one of the weeping-ash trees. Mothers and grown-up sisters had entered into the spirit of the idea, and were there in their light, pretty, early Victorian muslins and bonnets (I fancy they had provided the flags). An interested spectator of the sports, I began to feel nervous when my hour of trial arrived. I had practised running, hoping against hope that I might retrieve myself in the chief's opinion. I had every advantage. I was allowed the utmost "law." But, alas! I had not run a dozen yards before something tripped me up, and my little knee was so severely cut that I was borne off the course bleeding, to be sympathetically bound up with gossamer handkerchiefs before some masculine being whose identity I fail to recollect carried me home, where I was promptly put to bed.

I do not remember facing our captain after that—I think the great sports were the actual close of the season. But my ignominious defeat led to a curious result. When my mother suggested to me that a sélection from my many verses and little tales should be printed for the benefit of the recently erected Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, I acquiesced.

Hating to be called "the little poetess," "the little authoress," as I had hated it—hiding either up trees, by Tyler's help when out of doors, and with my grandmother's help, indoors, when the county bigwigs came to view the strange child whose poems Doctor Vidal

had told them about—I was reconciled to the idea of appearing in print, because of my ignominious *fiasco* in those races.

The first publishers—Messrs. Addey and Cundall—to whom my mother showed my infantine work, accepted it, and before foggy autumn worked its usual evils in my regard I had personally interviewed my first publisher friend, Mr. Joseph Cundall, had chosen the various items together with him, and was shown how to correct proofs. For I had made one stipulation. I well knew—how Heaven alone can tell!—that my work would be challenged as an imposture, as indeed it was, in a guarded way, by many. I had also no belief whatever in my mother's literary capacities. So my stipulation was that no hand but my own should correct my proofs, and no one touched them, by Mr. Cundall's order, after they had left my hands.

The book *Wild Spring Flowers* was published in the spring of 1852. It was reviewed. The *Literary Gazette* compared the poems to those of the great Wordsworth. Its editions occupy a fair space in the Catalogue of the British Museum under the heading of my *nom de guerre* "Alice Georgina," and the net profits, handed over to the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street, brought me a letter of thanks which embarrassed me considerably, for it addressed me as "Dear madam." "Dear madam!" and I was still in socks and strapped shoes! The following year, 1853, another volume was published, *Wild Rosebuds*. Then came family catastrophes. My sister fell ill of gastric fever. As soon as she recovered, my mother became worse than my sister, for she had developed internal disease, and

the then renowned specialist, Dr. Rigby, said decidedly she could not live long, and that in any case she would never walk again.

Life had developed into unexpected horror. My sister's fever left an ulcer in the arm. She lost power over the limb. All idea of bringing her out as a young pianist was given up. This fretted my mother, then prostrate on the sofa. She made a confidant of me, and told me why. My grandfather, although he was in as absolute an ignorance of the fact that there was madness in the Mangold family as my mother herself was, had seen symptoms in my father which pointed strongly to brain trouble of an incurable kind. She had hoped that should such a calamity occur my sister might take up his clientèle.

How I suffered—sitting by my mother's couch—knowing that in addition to her acute physical torture she had to endure such mental anxiety, I should be accused of exaggeration if I attempted to describe. Those short winter days, mostly of such fog that there never was any real light, could hardly be exceeded in dreary misery by any of the imagined woes of purgatory. How I cursed my young years, my utter incapacity to help! If I could have changed places with my mother I would. (As dying seemed to me the only delight in life, I cannot say I would have died for her, but I would willingly have lived under any conditions.) Then with spring came hope. My mother was well enough to proceed, together with my sister, to Aveley. I was left with my father, and I improved the occasion.

My grandfather—in my hearing—had attributed all

the family sickness to the insalubrity of the house we lived in. So I assailed my father one day. "You mean to die here—rot here!" I cried (quoting Redlaw's speech to the waif in Dickens's *Haunted Man*, for I believed argument strengthened by quotation). "If you keep us here it will be murder!"

Why I impressed him I cannot tell. Next day we went hand-in-hand to look at houses in various squares. I would not listen to the suggestion of any *street*. My experiences of life in a street were far too terrible to a sensitive, beauty-loving human being.

We saw and inspected, from attic to basement, certain houses in squares which seemed to attract my father as much as myself. But, the rent and taxes! He desponded. "Write to Mr. Helme and ask his advice," I dictated. To my astonishment, he meekly obeyed; and, still more to my astonishment, Mr. Helme arrived at the earliest moment, glad to encourage any initiative suggestion of my father's, and with a generous proposition.

He had thought, with others, that the house was hardly a fitting one. But, "Eliza!" Well, every one except myself seemed in some way in sufficient awe of the former "Eliza Vidal" to eschew any interference with her and her mode of dealing with her life problems. "He had not liked to worry Eliza." Eliza being safely *pro tem.* at Aveley, Mr. Helme suggested a house in Queen Square which an old friend of his was selling at auction. If my father would like to live there, he would buy it, and become his landlord at a nominal rent.

From what I have heard in late years, "Eliza"

resented the movement from first to last, but finally succumbed to the inevitable, and I had the ineffable delight, the extraordinary joy, of leaving my first ugly London home for ever.

In Queen Square, although the trunks of the trees looked as if daily blackened, those poor black trees put forth green buds in due season, all the greener and fresher-looking by contrast with the ebon branches and twigs they mercifully hid for at least some months in the year. I was overjoyed—for a time. For hardly had we breathed freely in the fine, airy old Queen Anne house before the Crimean War broke out.

CHAPTER V

THE story of the Russo-Turkish War is too well known to need explanation, in the history of an insignificant unit, *why* the ill effects of that war affected the unit and its surroundings. In the spring of 1853 "rumours of wars" had the usual deleterious consequences to peace-loving citizens. Those who were rich enough to hold investments and trouble themselves about stocks and shares were plunged into a slough of desponding anticipation. The labourers in science and art stood, metaphorically, watching their earnings drop away from them as dry leaves from the trees in an early and cruel winter.

In September a little sister was born, who afterwards proved the unhappy heritress of family brain trouble. But no hint of after misery was given by the fair, bright babe, who at once centred my elder sister's erratic sympathies. She became a young mother to the new babe. At this Pauline's birth (curiously enough, she was named after the great-uncle Paul who outraged the laws of nature by marrying his brother's daughter—indeed, he was her godfather) my grandfather, Dr. Vidal, made a bold bid for my adoption. He would make any arrangement for my education my parents

suggested, if only, for the future, I might be his adopted one, to be dealt with as he thought best.

His suggestion was received with astonishment, incredulity—in fact, as a sorry jest. I felt the derision with which his desire was met bitterly. Still, since my mother's sufferings, I had felt in some sort her knight. Compassion and reverence for her resignation bound me to her with hooks of steel. I felt that if I had been allowed to live entirely at Aveley I should have fretted and worried myself to death about her.

She was very fragile—just about forty—and the incidental troubles of the great war overburdened her to a cruel extent.

Before my sister was a year old, my father's income dwindled at least sixty per cent. Some of the boarding-schools became bankrupt, others struggled on with half the paying number of pupils. "Private lessons" ceased altogether. The pressure of war taxes and the general depression of trade set the heads of families to the immediate reduction of expenses; and as at that time home education by visiting teachers and even relatives was a hobby, the first luxury to be eschewed was the extraneous education of the young people.

My father was seized with his worst kind of gloom, depression. This spurred my mother to chivalrous efforts on his behalf. A ready champion to any friend in trouble, she forgot herself in efforts to help him, her husband.

She began to teach, herself, and soon obtaining daily pupils, was so successful that her contribution to the family exchequer almost supplied the deficit. A fine linguist, she was so marvellously well read that she

soon lifted any pupil with mental ability into a higher plane of thought.

A year previously, I had had a peculiar attack of unconsciousness lasting many hours, upon which the doctors called in forbade any future attempts at prose or verse. My mother therefore adopted a drastic method of checking my scribbling. The first time I brought her a little story, she laughed at it, and said it was time I began life in a serious spirit. My little scribblings had been a joke, as it were. They had made people smile—had amused them. I must now "try to be a good girl like other little girls, and learn my lessons."

I was stunned, I remember, for a time. It was like a horrible sort of dying which did not release the soul. I died to myself within myself, as it were, and within myself buried my literary impulses, sadly, sorrowfully, I thought for ever.

But ensuing restlessness, the constant hauntings of these mental inhabitants—not only my old men friends, but younger, more vigorous entities—scared me into begging to be allowed to learn drawing. Perhaps, when I drew well enough to draw these people who persisted in coming before me and living their lives over again in my presence, as it were, I should rid myself of them by putting them into pictures.

I began to draw—horrible attempts! but sufficient to satisfy my mother, and afterwards the authorities of the lately established "School of Design," that I was a possible pupil. Indulgence was allowed me—I was under the age usually admitted—being barely nine.

For a year I attended the school in Gower Street, the

initial house which afterwards developed into the present great schools of art. I found "freehand drawing" hopeless work. Still, I was the pet of the school; all the girls were most kind to me, and for Miss Gann, the head mistress, I conceived a passionate admiration as strong as any of my mother's hero-worships. I remember pacing the pavement opposite her house in Woburn Square hours at a time to see her, or any one belonging to her, go in or out. Once, when I took her, shivering with excitement at my own daring, some flowers which had been given me, I was admitted to the sanctuary of the dining-room where she sat with her aged mother, whom I at once adored as the mother of so wonderful a being. Such an inward joy as my interview with Miss Gann and her mother that afternoon sweetens an after-life in some mysterious way we cannot understand—we, who have ideas that years are greater than minutes—that time exists in eternity, when it belongs only to the material universe!

I made little progress in the slow but, I presume, sure and safe method of development of hand and eye power and accuracy which was inaugurated at the Gower Street "School of Design." But what proved my most delightful initiation into the attractive science of medicine were the lectures given by a learned surgeon—Mr. Marshall, I think—at Marlborough House, lectures on anatomy. Although exhausted by the walk to the future palace, where I had already seen the funeral car of the "Iron Duke" (it was there exhibited to the public for a considerable time), the lectures aroused me to enthusiasm, and my notes and diagrams in my notebook were a labour of love.

Then came a short break in my life, which was the beginning of a new era of thought, a new well-spring of emotion.

I was invited to stay with my godmother and the lady with whom she lived, Miss Holbech, at Alveston (pronounced Awson), a village a few miles from Stratford-on-Avon. I was eager to go. My godmother, Miss Marks, was enshrined in my memory as the image of some holy, beautiful woman-saint in a niche. To be with her, to breathe the air she breathed, to hear her speak—it seemed too good to be true. My mother was against the idea. At last she gave way. I left Aveley, stayed in Queen Square long enough for my wardrobe to be arranged for the "gentle life" led by the two old ladies in Alveston Cottage, then proceeded to Leamington by train.

At Leamington the carriage met me, and I was driven the nine miles to Alveston.

The Cottage was a charming, old-fashioned house in a really beautiful garden, beyond which were kitchen garden and orchard. Miss Holbech was an upright, vigorous, handsome old lady, who wore very high caps. The household consisted of old people. Butler, housekeeper, maid, as well as coachman, had grown grey in the service of their respected mistress. Only one was moderately young—the second housemaid, told off to be my maid. "You and I are the only young people in the house," I said to her, one night as she was brushing my hair for the allotted half-hour, after which remark, evidently repeated, I was provided with a book to read. I was "not to talk to Ann."

The house was all rule—rigid rule. The change

from the absolute freedom allowed by my grandfather was tremendous. I was literally, then, a wild weed, unkempt, whose only notion of order in life was the experience of the "School of Design." At Alveston Cottage everything moved like clockwork. The bell rang for prayers. Then came prayers. The bell rang for breakfast. Then came breakfast. Then my morning was parcelled out. So much piano practice, so much reading with my godmother, a quarter of an hour in the garden sandwiched in. Dressing for luncheon. Luncheon (my dinner), at which there were consultations between the ladies as to the exact quantity I was to consume.

"I did not know I was coming to school," I wrote to my mother—with other remarks, one of which was that Miss Holbech was "Betsey Trotwood" in *David Copperfield* to the life. And my mother had given permission to both ladies to read my letters before they were sent on!

Shortly after my arrival, my godmother gave me religious instruction; and those hours in her own room, alone with her, were like fleeting visits to heaven. Seated in her chair among her exquisitely arranged *impedimenta*, she spoke of God to me, with a light in her sweet, faded brown eyes which seemed to make her transparent features luminous. She spoke of law, order in life being dear to God; that we could not really love Him Who loved us so dearly if we did not love what He loved. The words of such a fervent lover of God set me on fire with longing to do right. I remember that a great revulsion of feeling ensued; instead of liking freedom and licence, I conceived so

intense a desire to live by rule, that it never has really ceased since.

"Many a truth is spoken in jest," I wrote to my mother. "When you used to call my godmother 'Saint Susanna' it was in jest, but you spoke the truth, and nothing but the truth" (which letter was also inspected, as well as the "Betsey Trotwood" one).

But although I became obedient, heart and soul, to the noble women who were trying to "train me for God," as my godmother termed it, they tested me sometimes more severely than they knew.

I might walk in the kitchen garden. I might pick up "windfalls" in the orchard; but I must never eat of the forbidden fruit.

There were raspberries in abundance, gooseberries, a most tempting bed of Alpine strawberries, ripening pears, and ruddy apples from the trees—but not for me!

I stood that temptation. But when I was forbidden to touch a certain book which was being read aloud in the evening—a book I longed to go on with—and was left alone in the drawing-room with it in its place on the table while the old ladies were dining, I peeped—then I read.

Then I confessed, and felt small and wretched.

There were delights, however, as well as trials. Miss Holbech was the aunt of the Mordaunt family. We spent a day at Walton, which the widowed Lady Mordaunt was about to relinquish to her son, the well-known Sir Charles, whom I met together with his younger brother. He was a fair, handsome young man. The gardens and woods at Walton were the

finest I had as yet seen. Miss Alice Mordaunt (afterwards Viscountess Cole) took me about. Then there was a visit to Miss Holbech's family estate, then occupied by her aged brother and unmarried niece. An old house of a romantic interior and exterior, with many old family portraits—with a curiously shaped entrance hall, where a peculiar light fell upon the statues and busts; a house I have often visited and recorded in the waking dreams which gave birth to my many novels.

I made many friends in and about Alveston. Captain and Mrs. Holbech, Miss Holbech's near relatives, lived in a house near the Cottage. We were constantly there. Then there was the Townshend family—widowed mother and several daughters—whose beautiful, long, low house, covered with climbing roses and creepers, was among lawns and shrubberies sloping down to the River Avon. The girls took me on the river, and seemed hugely amused at my remarks and replies to their questioning. My playing was popular. I was sorry for it. The dislike to "perform" to any audience, however small and friendly, was as strong in me then as it has been ever since.

Last, but not least, there was a girl of my own age I had conceived a violent admiration for when seated behind her in the pretty, very ritualistic church.

She was slim, with a long, graceful neck. Her round face had a warm colour on her cheeks—a colour which came and went as she spoke, when we were introduced in the churchyard afterwards by our elders. Quick, bright, slightly scornful dark eyes, were her greatest attraction.

She was Augusta Woodmass. Her father, a squire, had married the daughter of Lord Erskine, and Mrs. Woodmass was slowly dying of consumption.

I never saw Mrs. Woodmass. In my following visits to "spend the day" with Augusta, Augusta presided at the table, seated opposite her father—presided with a dignity and self-possession strange in one so young. We became very intimate; for she was a girl who had thought, felt, read, and reasoned upon what she read as well as upon her own personal observations of men and things. I parted from her, after two months' frequent companionship, with pain. We corresponded frequently afterwards. Two very touching letters I well remember. One recorded her mother's death. The other, a year later, was dated from either Torquay or Bournemouth. I knew she was ill, and taken here and there according to the advice of various lung specialists. But that letter was a blow.

"I am dying," she wrote—her handwriting was still clear and firm. "You will know that I don't mind—especially as I am allowed to receive Holy Communion. Fancy, what a privilege for any one as young as I am!" Then, after much affectionate reference to our talks together in the past, she ended with, "Remember, when you hear I am gone, I am quite happy to go." Softened though the news was by herself in that unselfish consideration for others which was one of the beautiful traits of a wonderful young creature, I felt her loss, and missed her letters, severely.

* * * * * *

While at Alveston, I saw Shakespeare's house.

Then the tiny bedroom where he was born was in a disgraceful condition; the ceiling and walls seemingly blackened by smoke, and disfigured with the autographs of Dick, Tom, and Harry—the most illiterate and insignificant adding ill-spelt comments "writ large." What foreign visitors must have thought of our worse than neglect of the shrine of our greatest poet's relics—very few they were, by the way, then—one hardly likes to think. However, the generations which have succeeded those "flourishing" in 1854 have wiped out the record of their elders' neglect. The nation need not blush for Shakespeare's house in the twentieth century.

The Lord Warwick of that day knowing the Holbeches well, we spent a privileged afternoon wandering where we would, during the family's absence, at the Castle, pleasantly entertained at intervals by the somewhat stately housekeeper. That which struck me most was, when entering one of the corridors, the portrait of Charles the First on horseback, so hung at its end that it produced the illusion of the monarch alive, riding towards one.

A curious recollection of that day came to me only a few years ago. I was seeing my friend, Sir Henry Irving, on the stage, after, I think it was his last, or almost his last, performance of *Charles the First.* He had placed me in his throne-like chair, and sat at my side talking to me, on a low stool. The footlights were extinguished. In the dim light of the few gas-jets about the wings his likeness to that picture—a replica of that at Hampton Court—was marvellous.

The whole visit to Alveston was a turning-point in

my life, and had the most important influence on my whole after-life. Whether my godmother knew the kind of future life she was trying to prepare me to meet I cannot tell. In any case, the rough facts I was to be confronted with on my return home I encountered, if not forewarned, forearmed.

PART II

STUDENT LIFE

CHAPTER VI

MY father was a "man of few words," at least, except on the occasions when he was betrayed into discoursing upon the subject of his favourite German authors —Schiller, Jean Paul Richter, Herder, Klopstock, Zchokke, and the rest—and especially when the topic of his worshipped master, Hummel, came upon the carpet, when he became diffuse to prolixity.

But though a silent man in general, that he had emotions too deep for ordinary utterance I well knew, and after his marriage with my mother, who was, in his idea, his absolute superior in all ways, his anxiety lest she should permanently suffer by sharing his misfortunes gnawed him inwardly, unceasingly.

When the demon of war had its fangs into every one, more or less, in the unhappy countries engaged in it, his Eliza certainly suffered severely. Work she loved, but she was hardly strong enough for the long teaching hours. Then provisions rose to incredible prices. Of late years bread had been cheap, and the best meat sevenpence or eightpence per pound. When the war had fairly started, the price of the loaf doubled at the same time as the income-tax; meat realised tenpence or a shilling a pound. Certain meats rose to one and fourpence, while most other edibles suddenly became luxuries.

My German grandfather having died insane after many years' melancholia, it was not astonishing that his only child, my father, showed signs of that dismal brain trouble. Arriving home from Alveston, I was at once struck by a change in him. He welcomed me absently, and seemed to take no interest in anything. My mother, on the contrary, seemed brighter than usual. She had the rare faculty of playing a losing game. In her work, and courageous acceptance of each difficult situation as it arose, she was showing how the individual is in some ways superior to the crowd. An army meeting with defeat after defeat generally becomes demoralised. But defeat after defeat can, and on occasion does, brace the individual, spurs him or her to greater effort, lifts the unit securely above the waves which threaten to engulf it. Such characters have often suffered an initial crucifixion and have survived; thus troubles to them have lost the paralysing faculty, which may perhaps be the explanation in some cases of individual bravery in daily life.

I felt there was "something in the air." When my mother took me to Aveley, I knew!

My grandfather had said that "Mangold had not the ghost of a chance" as regarded sanity, and he and my mother told me that my duty was to prepare for becoming a professional pianist as soon as possible, to take his place, as it had been suggested my sister should do until the ulcer stiffened her arm.

It was a blow to me. I had secretly hoped that after I had pursued the education my mother talked so much about, after I had meekly attended professors' classes

and patiently worked at the usual uninteresting items which every one learnt, I might emancipate myself, and WRITE.

Now, just as my grandmother's carving-knife had in the old days been my fiery sword barring a gipsy-like freedom, duty, duty—infused into my whole being as a mainspring by my godmother—barred all hope of a literary future. I was to be a musician.

Of course I acquiesced. But the light went out of life when I voluntarily bound myself to the future drudgery for which I had so compassionated my father.

How I fought the perpetual resistance of my impulses! The following three years I worked in an inward rebellion which I had hard work to master. I practised; I went to French and German classes; and when I felt unequal to mix with my kind I went *on the roof.*

I had always needed hiding-places when the disgust for life on this dark and difficult planet which was born in me threatened some danger if I did not wrestle with it alone, and there was no possible solitude either within or without the old house in Queen Square. One day I found beyond the trapdoor to the attic lumber-room and tiny door leading to the roof a fine if sooty hermitage.

I took refuge on the roof whenever I felt the insistent need to be alone. And the roof introduced me to the friend of my girlhood who had the greatest spiritual and tonic influence in that particular disappointing crisis—who was both my spur and consolation.

Two doors beyond our house lived the well-known Serjeant Karslake and his hardly less well-known sons and daughters. The youngest members of the family had a bird-room at the top of the roof, and one day, as I was admiringly looking in at the window and watching the many canaries and goldfinches flying from perch to perch, the door opened within, and a boy and a girl I knew well by sight came in; four startled eyes stared at me.

(I was reminded of this incident when invited to meet that very boy, grown a bearded man, on board the *Britannia* in 1902. To my discomfiture, he spoke of it before our hospitable hosts, Captain and Mrs. O'Callaghan, and their other guests.)

This odd introduction of startled gazing led, I cannot tell why, to our acquaintance. The young people spoke to me in the square. The youngest daughter but one, Hester, had been admired by me at a distance. I found her as lovely in mind as I thought her in person—for she exactly resembled the pictures of Ethel Newcome in Thackeray's *Newcomes*, just then the talk of the fiction readers. Clever, good, there was about her a certain mental and moral bravery, a cheerful resignation to whatever life might confront her with, which tacitly chid me for my morbid reluctance to face duty and its consequences.

During my next summer at Aveley, my father, who was teaching in the neighbourhood, and gave lessons to me as well as to his other pupils, brought some of Chopin's works for me to study.

Such a new world of music opened out before me as I worked hard at their technical difficulties, that my

latent musical enthusiasm was reanimated. Practice assumed a very different aspect. I could work hours at scales and exercises with the prospect of Chopin and Henselt to follow. I began to love the quaint old drawing-room in Aveley Cottage, with its curious old furniture and pictures, its bay-window filled with my grandmother's finest plants, its organ in one corner and long-tailed Stodart grand piano in the other, with the love of the student for the scene of his congenial labours. Then through the open windows I could see the trees, the flowers, whose perfumes crept in and afterwards mingled with the exquisitely harmonised Chopin phrases in my memory.

After correspondence on the subject between Frau von Henselt and my mother—who, although they had not yet met, had interchanged letters ever since Henselt himself made my mother's acquaintance—it was settled that I was to accompany my mother to stay at Schloss Gersdorf during Henselt's furlough from royal and other engagements in "Petersburg" (as all but the English call the Russian capital) in August and September, 1858.

That year is starred out in the recollection of all persons of all ages who lived in it as the year when the earth was honoured by a friendly visit from the great comet discovered by Dr. Donati in June, 1858, and therefore called by his name. This strange heavenly visitant, like so many earthly occurrences of greater significance after the event, crept quietly into view—one might say, sneaked in upon "the naked eye"—a luminous object of insignificant dimensions. But as time proceeded, the brilliant nucleus, with its fiery,

sparkling tail, grew gradually until it assumed alarming proportions and seemed spread from end to end of the sky-view. Moonlight was in abeyance, for we had, in August, literally a species of nocturnal sunlight. Little wonder, when the magnificent tail, of peacock-like shape, was said to be forty millions of miles long! A great comet had appeared in the first years of the nineteenth century, displaying itself magnificently across the sky, as it well might, according to the computation by Herschel that its length was a hundred millions of miles! Most astronomers elected to consider that comet a grander creation than Donati's, but then some scientists prefer to think a past glory greater than a present one. The splendour of Donati's comet, as I watched it night after night, was extraordinary. Imagine a permanent blaze of stationary fireworks extending from horizon to horizon—glittering, scintillating, each particle of light distinct from the other—waxing more fiery, casting greater light upon the earth as the darkness deepened! Records do not mention the general apprehension lest this conflagration in the sky menaced the earth—that the destruction of our little planet by fire was threatened. Timid people trembled. They were hardly sympathetic when the astronomers hinted at the probable collision of the luminous monstrosity with the gentle planet Venus, about the 18th of October. The terrors threatening our neighbours are hardly as paralysing to us as those which implicate our own safety.

In August we started for Henselt's home in Gersdorf, Silesia, stayed the night at Dresden, and proceeded to Görlitz, the station nearest to Gersdorf, by a local train.

A gem in broughams, lined with white brocaded satin (the gift to Henselt, among many other things, of a royal Russian), met us. Our way lay through the fir forest. Hardly did we emerge from its sombre shades and congratulate ourselves upon being at the end of the terribly rough waggon road, with its deep ruts and fallen trunks, when we reached the gate of the encircling grounds, and driving along the white, pebbly carriage-road, saw the fine, white castle, at whose door stood Henselt, dark, handsome—clad in white, and wearing a red fez—welcome in his dark, shining eyes and eager, outstretched hands, as he descended the steps, and handing us out, kissed us both with friendly warmth.

The "Jungfrau Marie"—as Madame von Henselt's confidential maid, a slim, pretty, refined little person, was called in the household—met us in the huge stone hall, and with many smiles conducted us up the polished wooden staircase, about whose balustrades clambered a very decorative creeper with strawberry-like berries I once saw again in the Kew greenhouses, but never elsewhere, to our rooms.

There were two lofty chambers, opening into each other by means of massive folding-doors. There were folding-doors in our big bedroom, which, I afterwards found, communicated with the grand *Rittersaal* of the old castle, restored by Henselt to an imitation of its former splendour. After Marie had tendered her services and herself served us tea—with tiny plates of delicious-looking *tartines*, as the French call bread-and-butter, the taste of which was in direct contradiction to their appearance—Frau von Henselt entered and welcomed us.

She then was a fine, but elderly-looking woman, although wrinkled, with tired-looking, faded blue eyes, not yet grey. Her letters had been such exquisite specimens of their kind—before she was divorced from her first husband, and married Henselt, she had sat at the feet of Goethe, and had been intimate with the leaders of light and learning in Weimar—that my mother, who had imagined Henselt's "Rosalie," to whom he had dedicated some of his finest early works, to be one of the loveliest of her sex, was disappointed.

However, that Frau von Henselt was a worthy and most amiable châtelaine of the beautiful estate was conclusively proved during our two months' visit, when she exerted herself to make up to me by tender, solicitous kindness for my sufferings during my brief, but terrible pupilage.

For Henselt was not only a stern, but a capricious teacher. Also, he had openly scoffed at the Hummel school of pianoforte-playing when a co-student with my father in Weimar, and, mere lad as he then was, had initiated a school of his own.

The principal characteristic of Henselt's method was absolutely to negative every rule laid down by Mozart and his humbler followers, Hummel, Cramer, Czerny, Kalkbrenner, and others, who advised loose wrist and much finger-work.

That his first lesson to me was given on an organ, and was an arbitrary study in legato-playing, shows the trend of the system. He insisted on his difficult exercises being practised with weights—copper coins by preference—upon the wrists, for he ruled that in piano-playing the wrists were not to be used as joints. There

were two kinds of tone: one was to be produced by finger-pressure (single notes of all kinds), the others by loose working of the arms from the shoulders (chords and all passages of a bravura kind).

"I am put in irons," I cried to my mother in despair, after that first arbitrary, rudimentary, subversive kind of lesson. "I have to begin all over again—in irons!"

There were some horrible hours of misgiving, fear, hopelessness, to be worn through by me alone. Then —as it has so often helped me since—a recollection of the most important two months of my life came to my rescue. The memory of my godmother's teaching—of how law and order and method and arrangement belonged essentially to God's world, while desultoriness and all that was undefined, haphazard (*Liederlichkeit* was Henselt's strong term for it), was tending downwards—came to me like an angel comforting me in my hour of anguish.

For to find myself plunged back into the beginning of music, as it were, was literally an agony. My grandfather had spoken to me with such earnestness—his ruddy cheeks pale, his clear blue eyes moist with emotion—of the seriousness of my responsibilities as the future bread-winner of the family when, as he feared, that mantle must fall from my father's shoulders, that I dreaded the loss of a single hour of my preparation.

It could have been nothing but a Heaven-sent grace which made me, then and there, swear to myself that, however arbitrary and seemingly impossible this extraordinary school of pianoforte playing I was initiated into might be, I would go through with it.

A grace—just as when the iron resolve to resist the material dogmas of Channing came to me—descended into my young soul a second time. It was well that extraneous help came at the right moment, for I had a long ordeal to go through.

Henselt, in teaching, was a raging lion. He stalked about the great old castle-chamber, shouting his anathemas when I was in error, but never directing. It was all a storm of corrections, given between his favourite pastime of fly and wasp killing with a leathern flap at the end of a stick. From his tirade while I was at the piano I learnt only an intense endurance of the worst mental torment which one human being can inflict upon another. My real tuition began when he himself took my place upon the stool, and after viciously caricaturing me, began himself to show what should be played, and how. In these supplements to the lessons I learnt all his method, all his somewhat quack-like ideas and rules, and all the genius which lay behind these musical quips and quirks of a great mind warped (as even the legitimate royal Bavarian minds have proved themselves warped) by his well-known descent from a monarch eccentric to fatuity.

As the French well say, it is only the first step which really counts. There is a slang expression which is so apt that I can find no other equally to the point—the invented verb, to "buckle-to." I buckled-to, with a will. I bore the horrible headaches which prostrated me after those awful lessons as a necessary evil. I practised exactly as I was told. The consequence was, that in a week I was playing the smaller pieces of

Chopin and Henselt exactly as Henselt required them to be played; and in a month I was playing his advanced studies in his own way, after his own invented school of *technique.*

Meanwhile there was a parallel life at the romantically beautiful old castle, which grew out of the barren Silesian plain as white, pure, and relatively as fine an object as the renowned Taj Mahal itself in the torrid fields of India, which was a make-weight against temptations to despair.

After a few days alone with Henselt and his wife, a pleasant bustle in the establishment was followed by the arrival of their only son, Alexander, a second lieutenant in an infantry regiment stationed at Breslau, and his senior officer, Lieutenant Dagobert von Gerhardt. Resting in our rooms during the hottest afternoon hours, we heard dogs barking, joyous masculine voices shouting and laughing, as it seems to me only Germans shout and laugh. When we descended to the ceremonious *Abendessen* in the dining-hall, where light never seemed to stream in freely through the mullioned windows in the three-feet-thick castle walls, a lanky figure in uniform sprang forward and saluted. A thick-set, shorter officer did likewise, more solemnly, in the background. Henselt introduced "*mein Sohn, und sein freund, Herr von Gerhardt.*"

I was struck by the most startling likeness of the tall, slim young man to my old friend, Tobin Bush. As I sat by his side at the huge round table, and he spoke his well-pronounced English sentences—brought up in Russia, with Russian his native tongue, he was a

fine linguist, as people who speak first in Russian mostly prove to be—it was like being with Tobin once more, Tobin grown up. I should have thought myself fanciful had not my mother, when we retired for the night and I asked her if Alexander did not remind her of some one, replied, "Most certainly—your great friend at Aveley, Tobin Bush."

That Tobin seemed as it were restored to me—our friendship had been still in its early days when his family removed to Bristol—lent young Alexander a potent charm in my eyes. We became great friends—read English together, wandered about the wild but extensive grounds, went on the lake in the three-cornered punt, and with Herr von Gerhardt strolled up the village and took afternoon coffee at the Pastor's or the houses of his aunts—his mother's sisters, Frau von Schirmann and Frau von Rozinsky—who, with their respective daughters, Rosel and Marthe, generally spent their summers near Frau von Henselt in her big castle.

In the evening the *rittersaal*—the last and finest of the suite of many drawing-rooms, rooms fit for any palace, with their several decorations of silver and platinum, or malachite, or rich carvings, satin and gold hangings, tapestries, embroidered furniture, paintings, statues, and bibelots—the *rittersaal*, with its spacious polished parqueterie flooring, its high carved ceiling and musical instruments, was lighted by wax-candle chandeliers, and we young people danced. On the weekly reception day the suite of drawing-rooms was also illuminated, and in the dining-hall below tea, coffee, and cakes were served in the afternoon, and a

substantial supper later for those who chose to stay for the evening. Some of the guests were of the old exclusive *noblesse*. Intermarriage with the *wohlgeboren* across the Polish frontier had by no means rendered them less so. (Commend me to a member of a noble Polish family for a semi-satanic pride!) But some were refined men and women, noble. Plenty of coats of arms might be seen on the carriages in the courtyard on Frau von Henselt's reception days, but some had travelled, had come in contact with the world, had lost the false notion of the special importance of their tiny corner of the globe and of themselves.

Although Alexander was so tall, I could stretch myself to his shoulder, having, in three years that my grandfather had insisted upon my having plentiful food without a single restriction, grown from a puny child into a girl, square, developed, of some inches over five feet. My mother was, in those days, considered a tall woman. When we were passing the great mirrors in the castle I saw that we were almost the same height. (Everything connected with the great dress-subject was so disagreeable to me that it was only when I remarked upon this that I learnt we had, in length of skirt and sleeve, the same measurement.) At Gersdorf I seemed to have sprung suddenly into young girlhood. Marthe von Rozinsky was considerably over twenty; Rosel von Schirmann had already been *Braut* seven years, and looked forward to being married some time after her thirtieth birthday. But they treated me as a friendly companion of their own age, only wondering occasionally, and bantering me upon my lack of know-

ledge of the ordinary feelings and thoughts and ways of ordinary girls.

In Germany, then, the "correct thing" was for girls to take but a few turns in that stock dance, the waltz, with any one partner. Young men would come up to the seated girl, bow, ask for a waltz, waltz gravely, stiffly, round the room a few times, then as stiffly and ceremoniously conduct her to her seat, bow, leave her, and seek another partner. I thought this stupid, and Alexander, who already acquiesced as readily in my suggestions as his juvenile prototype had done, agreed with me. I therefore outraged accepted conventionality by dancing with him throughout a waltz, and, to his surprise even more than my own, no remark of any kind was made by either Henselt or that real specimen of a German *grande dame*, his wife—or, indeed, any one else.

Encouraged in the beginning of anarchical behaviour, Alexander seemed to take heart of grace from his parents "winking at" our friendship—a friendship in which I led, and he followed. I did not know till later that his gambling propensities were then causing, and had beforehand caused, both his father and mother grief, as well as pecuniary loss, and that they welcomed any wholesome interest which might beguile him from his temptations. I only saw that Henselt never looked more gratified than when he came upon his son and myself enjoying some long confabulation. Once, when it was the reception-day of a quaint, sweet old lady, the dame of an amiable old knight in the neighbouring castle of Waldau, and after a more strenuous lesson than usual that morning from Henselt I was the prey

of one of my most ferocious and cruel headaches, and leaving the crowd of young merry people, I was lying down on a sofa in the anteroom alone, and Alexander came, sat by me, and laid cool bandages on my hot head—Henselt, looking in, murmured a few words of approval, and vanished.

Alexander von Henselt was as fine a nurse as if he had been a military surgeon instead of a mere lieutenant. He made no remarks, after bringing me a dose prescribed by our hostess. He sat quietly renewing my bandages until some *bouillon* (that German broth so superior to any English beef-tea or Bovril or "Liebig") was brought from the kitchen by his orders, when—after administering it with determination that I should drink it to the dregs—he darkened the room, and left me with a solemn adjuration to sleep, so solemn, that after he went out I laughed. But I slept, and awoke free from pain, and able to join in the revelries. This *château* was beautiful in antique German style. There were grounds where lakes were bordered by stiff rows of poplars, and wherever one glanced, gardens, whose planting recalled the gardens in old French paintings, met the eye. Small tables were laid around the prettiest lake—coffee and varieties of fruit-cakes, *Zwieback* (a kind of sugared rusk), and other peculiarly German confectionery were served. Then came the dance in that ballroom, which seemed a *sine qua non* in Silesian castles —a hot supper of many elaborate courses—and a general stampede in the different vehicles waiting in the moonlit courtyard.

There was much gaiety of this innocent and somewhat countrified kind for the three weeks' furlough of

the two officers. The day before that fixed for their return there was a picnic in the great fir-forest which looked dark and mysterious as it loomed against the pale blue outline of mountains—its outskirts were about two miles beyond Gersdorf village. It was a day of an incident important to me at that era of my existence. A slight cloud had arisen between myself and my new playmate Alexander. He was moody, spoke little to any one, and used to stroll about the grounds within view of our windows in close converse with von Gerhardt. That their conversation was not of a soothing character to either could be seen by the character of those gestures with which most Germans emphasise speech. This dated from the return of the men—Henselt, the young men, and a Russian, Colonel Pavloff, a most courtly and well-informed officer, from a mountain expedition in the Riesengebirge.

Dated the "Schneekoppe," a poem was sent to our rooms by Herr von Gerhardt—full of adulation and flattery—which my mother immediately showed to the Henselts.

Perhaps Henselt had not lately had a fair excuse for one of his rages. In any case, he took an ordinary German *hommage à une demoiselle* seriously, and although in his position of host to this solid friend and companion of his son's, in whose ability to "keep him out of mischief" he believed, he showed but little of his wrath to the fat if sentimental Dagobert, he stormed in private, and was hard to pacify.

Alexander, also, was decidedly annoyed. But, after our picnic luncheon in the great pine-forest—it was spread in a green glade, the solemn pines encircling us, a

brook rippling with an unobtrusive murmuring over the pebbles at our feet—he asked me, somewhat ceremoniously, if I would care to see where the stream went.

As I was glad to see him once more the kind, simple, ingenuous youth I had liked so much, I readily acquiesced, and strolled through the forest, talking of forests and woods in Germany in comparison with the so-called forests and woods in England. It was only when we rested on a big boulder by the side of the lovely streamlet that he abruptly said, "I have something to say to you, Fräulein."

I felt he was on the warpath about those hateful verses. My anger bubbled up.

"If what you say has anything to do with that silly poem, I must beg you not to speak," I exclaimed. "I have had more than enough worry about the thing already. Your father—your mother—my mother—and now you! If I were a man, I would call your fat friend out and shoot him—if I could!"

He changed, cringed, begged my pardon. Tears were in his blue eyes—tears come readily to the eyes of Teutons. He excused von Gerhardt. He had only meant homage to my talent. He had a heart of gold. He was the best man in the world. He excused his father. He knew he was terrible in a teaching capacity. "He once gave me a lesson," he seriously said; "but as he said that the second time he might kill me—he could not trust himself—he never gave me another." Then he told anecdotes of royal and noble pupils in Russia, who had meekly endured his vituperations, had even submitted to something approach-

ing to personal violence without resentment. One young princess invariably had a fainting fit, or violent hysterics, when she issued from the chamber of horror into the ante-room, and the door was shut upon the next victim; but when others who were in waiting commiserated her she deprecated their sympathy. "*Es ist doch himmelisch!*" she sobbed. My opinion of Russian ladies sank to zero during his earnest vindication of his father's autocracy as a teacher, with anecdotal illustrations.

Then he ventured more. "Fräulein Alice, you must know that I love you," he said timidly. "I am young, you are young, but what is that? If you could love me, I could wait years."

It was of no use to argue, he had an answer to everything. I acknowledged I liked him very much. I would not answer for the future in any way, because my life seemed to be one of ordinary work. Besides, there were his parents. To my astonishment he said that they knew, and approved, but that nothing could be done while we both were so very young.

"I shall tell my mother," I said, as we strolled back; and I did, as soon as we returned to the castle. She was not surprised, but said of course nothing could be said, openly. It might be a mere idea of a somewhat romantic boy—Germans were always romantic.

Alexander went away, so did von Gerhardt, who seemed depressed, and Colonel Pavloff, who was cheery to the last. Then came work, hard work. But by the end of the two months' lessons I felt equal to face the working out of Henselt's peculiar system alone.

It would have to be alone. During the last few

lessons Henselt impressed this fact upon both my mother and myself. He said that in his views, opinions, and theories, he differed from all other teachers whatsoever, except those teachers who were his obedient pupils. (As he was then head of the music in the Government schools of all the Russias those teachers were numerous.) He made my mother promise that for no consideration whatever would she allow me to study under any other master, not even "der Vater," who was still a faithful follower of Henselt's rejected teacher, Hummel; and as for the English, if the dead John Field, "Russian Field," could be resuscitated, well and good. But for me to work under any English master, in or outside any English academy, would mean that I should be hopelessly confused, and should never arrive at anything.

I undertook to work out his system, and to become a worthy pupil, as far as my efforts would carry me—and I kept my word.

Alexander obtained furlough for a few days the week before our departure, and came alone. Although our time together was strictly limited, he remained the suitor, under restrictions. Only once was there anything approaching to grown-up love-making in the affair.

This was the night before his departure. He was to leave the castle next morning before we were "about." The cousins Rosel and Marthe came to "Abendessen." When he was about to escort them back to their respective quarters in the village, Henselt, in his imperious way, said I should go also. "A walk in the moonlight was good for young people."

No one dared dispute his orders, so a light shawl was fetched, and I started with the cousins.

On our return through the brilliant moonlight—the comet had lately faded into almost insignificance—Alexander spoke once more and asked me if I would be tacitly his *Braut* (betrothed) until I was old enough for him to visit England and ask my hand of my parents in a proper manner. I said "Yes," then in front of the great door he stopped, and, stooping, kissed me with a quaint solemnity which reminded me forcibly of my old friend Tobin—just as Henselt opened the door, and patting me on my shoulder in a paternal way, sent me up to my mother, who had already retired to our rooms.

CHAPTER VII

ON the journey to England we stayed a week or so in Darmstadt, for the Mangolds to hear me play after my adoption of "the Henselt school." There was no dissentient voice as to the supremacy of the style. The aged uncles, the middle-aged Kapellmeister Wilhelm and well-known composer Karl Amadeus, prophesied a distinguished future. Henselt was a power in the musical world, all the more interesting because he enacted the rôle of a kind of veiled prophet of the art. I had to play evening after evening at house after house, and then in semi-public, at Karl's Amateur Society, the *Cæcilia Verein.* To do anything in public was utterly detestable to me. I had to summon all my feelings of respect for duty to undergo the subtle torture of being starred out from a crowd of people and to perform with their eyes gazing at me.

The potency of early impressions has not yet been rightly estimated. Will it ever be? Will people ever recognise the fact that a word or a look, to a sensitive child—an impression, a slight influence exercised—stamps the inner self of that child as a coin is stamped in the mint, but that while the coin may wear out, the mind of the child is a spiritual entity—unalterable?

One day, when about four years old, when my ideas

of beauty of mind and soul and beauty of body were strongest and most defined, I happened to walk into a room which was undergoing its weekly cleansing, and saw myself, in a glass temporarily placed on the floor, literally for the first time, and was so horrified by my ugliness that I wept bitterly for days, could not be comforted, and was only relieved by writing a lament in verse detailing the traits in my personal appearance which grieved me most—I seemed, indeed, to be an embodied contradiction of everything I loved and admired in human beings. It was this early shock, I am sure, which made me permanently shy, made me shrink from being looked at all through my after-life. The instinct to escape from my kind, to disappear, to hide from eyes which could not possibly be gratified by the sight of me, was born then, to live until the very moment I pen these words.

My semi-public appearance was an ordeal—the first of a list of similar ordeals, for I never ascended a platform without a martyr-like resignation to being an obnoxious object to my fellow-creatures. The beautiful garden of Dr. Girsch, with whom we stayed as usual, the gentle and cultured companionship of Lennchen and Pauline Hueffel, now as lovely as girls as they had been as children, the excursions into the woods and over the hills—all these delights were compensations. It was when wandering in the woods that I mused deeply on my coming work. I had pledged myself, to my teacher Henselt, to work out his system. I was partly promised to Alexander as his future wife. I was, indeed, laden with responsibilities, and I was six months short of fifteen years!

Returned to London, my father was deeply moved when I played. It reminded him, he said, of when Henselt, after his defiance of Hummel, struck out his new path, and, defying the secret terror of Hummel's obedient pupils, overwhelmed all their fears and qualms with the novelty—the delicious charm—of the pedantically-æsthetic school of playing. Then I began the system of study I had myself formulated. I knew exactly where my difficulties lay, and, in daily practice, hour after hour, I tackled these first.

I began with four hours daily, increasing the time of practice by degrees until, some months later, I began at the stroke of 6 a.m., and only left off, exhausted with fatigue, at 8 or 9 p.m. I had but a couple of years to get through work which in the ordinary way would have occupied ten. It was of no use attempting to spare myself. I had "put my hand to the plough" and did not intend to "look back."

But there was a great obstacle to my progress. My father's Erard grand was hopelessly old.

Henselt had ordered a stiff keyboard for practice. I was almost in despair when, one day, a wonderful chance rescued me.

I went to Broadwood's, instead of my father, to choose a piano for one of his pupils. The well-known writer on keyed instruments and member of the firm until his death, Mr. A. J. Hipkins, was interested, apparently quite exceptionally, in my playing; and a few days later, I had an offer of a grand piano, gratis, to work upon, with promise of a change of instrument when the first newness had subsided.

I at once planned a scheme of practice which should

carry me securely through the list of studies and exercises, concertos, sonatas, and other pieces which Henselt had given me to perfect by the time we were to visit Gersdorf again. I had still many months before then; but so short was the time for what I had to do that it necessitated a practice each day of at least nine or ten hours, and, when my strength would last out, eleven or twelve.

I kept a record of the history of my work, and any deficit in time I made up afterwards when possible. My many difficulties I noted—to consult my master about when I was once again his pupil. To write to him, in his strenuous work in Petersburg, was so outrageous an idea that it never even occurred to me. (It would not have occurred to any one who knew Henselt.) The weeks passed—the months. I studied the subject of diet, and lived on meat, bread, and wine. My physical suffering was by no means inconsiderable, and exhaustion would sometimes supervene. There were evenings when it seized me suddenly—I would blow out the candles, shut the piano, and literally stagger upstairs to fling myself on my bed and sleep in my clothes. I often knew what it meant to have almost every muscle of the body in pain.

Still every day, every week, brought me nearer to August, when we were to visit Gersdorf again for Henselt to continue his instruction, and, I trusted, to give me the correct solutions of many problems I had been confronted with in my lonely studentship.

All preparations were made. Alexander was to be there—I cannot say that this was a conspicuous attraction for me, life had assumed too serious an aspect for any-

thing but my future profession to rank among things paramount in my estimation. My great anxiety, the mingled hope and fear which had me on the rack, was *what Henselt's opinion would be of what I had done.*

August came. Everything was arranged for our departure. Our trunks were packed, our route—to the very trains—agreed upon. Then, on the eve of our projected departure, came an unexpected letter from Frau von Henselt. When I saw it, felt its thickness, I had one of those convictions which have come to me at different times in my life, when that life and its issues have been weighed in the balance. I felt that, in some way, *all was over.*

That letter practically ended my present hopes, and plunged me into a slough of despond. It arrested our departure.

Ostensibly, the reason was that scarlet fever had broken out in the village. But Frau von Henselt, having already confided in my mother that her son had been "led away" by "a gambling set," had been cajoled into contracting "heavy debts of honour"—which she had secretly cancelled, as mothers will who dread a father's wrath, by realising her own personal property—confided still further in her. Alexander was in such financial trouble that the father must be told—and she dreaded the upshot.

Poor, gentle dame! With a tigerish genius for a husband, a weak, if amiable, youth for a son—what a martyrdom!

My compassion for her huge sufferings, which wrung my heart as I imagined them, softened the terrible disappointment.

It was not that any idea of Alexander and future betrothal and the rest of it was at an end, but that I was, as it were, violently flung back upon myself as a musical student. It was really only the hope of more lessons from Henselt—lessons during which I might show him the frightful difficulties I had been confronted with by my new work in his arbitrary style—which had been a backbone to me in constantly meeting with insurmountable problems; and that hope was over—at all events for a year. For if I went to Gersdorf the year following—Henselt was inaccessible to me in Petersburg; it was only during his holidays at Gersdorf I could reach him—what might my condition, in a musical sense, not have become then?

It was a huge, paralysing blow. Numbed at first, each hour lifted deadness of feeling, and introduced fresh horrors of miserable anticipation. I could not indulge in prolonged wanderings; I was too worn with work for physical exertion. My mother, although she railed against poor Alexander as the real cause of our disappointment, was practically sympathetic. Her first thought was to tide over the evil day to me; and I believe, now, it was she who encouraged friends to invite me to accompany them to the theatre, from which work had debarred me for a year, and roused me in other ways.

For a week or so I lived, for me, a more frivolous life than I have lived either before or since. It was, mentally, a counter-irritation—such as, physically, is recommended by the faculty in cases of bodily inflammation. At the end of my strange, short holiday of recreation I seemed to come to myself.

I realised that I was left to myself, and that upon myself alone depended my future.

I knew that to seek another master would be madness. I had progressed so far in "the Henselt school" that to desert his flag might mean annihilation of my musical powers. There was only one thing to be done —to work on alone according to his theories.

Once more I "buckled to"—it was literally that—pursued my scheme of work, with the exception of the elimination from the list Henselt had given me of those works of Liszt and Thalberg which I defy any human being to accomplish satisfactorily with a stiff wrist, and after a few months began to feel the stirring of that exquisite joy—a goal attained.

There was no doubt about it: six months later my life of uninterrupted practice had lifted me from pupilage into mastership. That this was partly owing to the need of reasoning for myself, judging for myself, I firmly believe. To be one's own teacher means rough progress—but it means progress; and it also means concentration, the reduction of waste time to a minimum. I fortified myself with reading every spare hour—generally my spare hours were those of Sunday alone—such tonic fare as Carlyle, with, as a species of intellectual dessert, the student's consolations, those spurring anecdotal books of the worthy author of *Self-help* and other works, in which Mr. Smiles, as it were, stretches out a strong hand to every other hand ready for his clasp, and grips it with a close, firm, encouraging pressure.

Uphill I went—up a rocky, precipitous ascent, frowning, unfriendly. Still, it was uphill; and when

one climbs a height, one knows that, keeping on, one must eventually reach the summit.

It was during this year, if I remember rightly, that I made the acquaintance of that courtly, interesting "gentleman of the old school," Mr. Henry Broadwood. Tall, dark, spare of build, he possessed a grace of manner and gentle charm of bearing which could hardly fail to be intensely agreeable to artists—impressionable, nervous, highly strung, as all artists with inspiration to start with, and exhausting work to follow, must of necessity be. He was generously, warmly interested in my future career. He advised my mother on the subject, and saying, as a final word, that unless Professor Ella, the musical autocrat of the aristocracy of music, to whom any delicate talent ought by rights to make a first appeal, would not "take me up" my best chances were *non est*, he gave us a pressing introduction to the magnate, who lived in ground-floor chambers in Harley Street (I think his number was 29 A). Mr. Broadwood's earnest letter brought an appointment to see us at his residence from "Ella."

Ella was a short, Punch-like individual—until I first saw the renowned Richard Wagner I thought he must be unique—with his large, broad-topped head, his beak-like nose, his protruding chin. But Wagner and he were more similar in outward likeness than any twins I have ever seen—and I have seen many.

Ushered by a page-boy into a library where shelves were crowded with the scores of operas, oratorios, and other orchestral and choral works, we were kept waiting for a while, as aspirants for the favour of

important personages are, as a rule, detained in outer chambers. Then the page, returning, led us along a covered way into a built-out room, with a skylight—a room furnished and decorated as if the art of music and its prophet, "Professor" Ella, were the only realities in this woeful world—and the bald little Professor received us with a condescension not untempered with geniality, for he was essentially in *bonhomie* what we now describe as "Cockney."

His reception of us when we were, at his invitation, seated opposite him, his office writing-table between us, was hardly encouraging. For he at once began to depreciate all English aspirants to the profession. (Known to be the chief encourager of foreign visiting artists, he was also known as the real, if not apparent, enemy to English music and musicians.)

"My dear lady, I cannot imagine why you have come to me," he almost fretfully began, addressing my mother. "Although I am an Englishman, I am compelled to acknowledge that England is the most unmusical country in the world! I am trying to educate musical amateurs. As you know, I bring over foreign talent, foreign genius, each season, at an enormous expense, often at such a loss to myself personally that at any moment I might have to give up my enterprise literally for the lack of means." Then he spoke of English music and musicians generally. He had not a good word to say for any work or any artist who could claim our mutual nationality. When my mother spoke of my being a pupil of Henselt he pursed up his wide lips—his face wore a Punch-like grin.

"Dear me, dear me," he ejaculated, "what a pity! Henselt has written some extremely pretty studies; they often figure among the pianoforte solos on my programmes, but as an executant? All I know of him is that whenever he appeared in public he made a dismal *fiasco*, breaking down, leaving the platform."

That my mother bore the little man's depreciation of one of the heroes in her long list did the greatest credit to her self-command and maternal self-abnegation. So mildly did she respond to his animadversions that presently I was seated at his big Erard playing to him.

It is well said that "music hath charms," etc. After I had played several pieces of Chopin and Henselt, Ella certainly melted — melted so far as to assure my mother that there was not a trace of anything English in me.

"Of course—the father German—old musical family —Henselt's teaching—sensible that, very sensible!" (When re-reading *Pickwick*, Jingle's ejaculations forcibly recalled old Ella's utterances when "off guard.") "Good child! Good child! Pity she's too old for a prodigy. (Don't like prodigies myself, but the public love 'em. Lor' bless you, the way the ladies flocked about Arthur Napoleon! But then, of course, he was a genius.) What can be done with you, child? Sit down, my dear, good lady! If your daughter here had been English, I should not have foregone an engagement—most important—to see you. I do not touch English music. Too wooden! But—well, sit down, both of you, and we will talk it over together."

"Talking it over" meant Ella's holding forth on

what he said was the only course open to me if I wished ever to play at the "Musical Union." I was to make the Chopin school my specialty, the fact that I was Henselt's only artist-pupil resident in England my *raison d'être* as an aspirant to public favour. Then, as soon as I could be seriously regarded as "grown up" —at present, of course, I was neither one thing nor the other—I must go to Paris and come out *there*. If I wished to appear first in England at the Musical Union, I must "arrive from the Continent."

It was all shrewd advice. Ella was nothing if not exquisitely shrewd. He had made his position, climbing from the lowly estate of a mere orchestral violinist to the proud altitude of musical dictator to all who aspired to be musical in the aristocratic circles and the circles which imitated them, a proof positive that he had that special genius for "getting on in the world" which includes a fine head for calculating chances, and not only reasoning, but acting upon them—and an almost superhuman gift of tact.

We left Harley Street that day pledged to follow his advice. He mapped it all out, even told us of an hotel with moderate charges we were to stay at in Paris —one he frequented himself when visiting that city— situated in the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette. He lamented, deplored, the impossibility of our claiming the suffrages of the great Parisian house of Erard, whose reigning sovereign was then the widow of the head of the firm. "It was a pity, a great pity, we were bound to the too English house of Broadwood."

My mother consulted that house, nevertheless, and Ella's programme was approved of. She also consulted

my grandfather, as she always did when there was any question regarding his loved grandchildren's pecuniary disabilities; and as he was more than ready to furnish "the sinews" for my "war" in the future abroad, it was decided, as far as events fifteen months ahead can be decided, that in the early spring of 1861 I was to be taken to Paris to give an "invitation concert."

PART III

MUSICAL LIFE

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY in 1861—the second week in January—we arrived in an ice-bound Paris. I was to make my début there as soon as possible. We were well armed with important "introductions."

Our first visit was to Pleyel's. (Mr. Henry Broadwood had specially recommended us; I was to give a *soirée d'invitation* in their rooms.) Our next was to the Galignanis.

The brothers Galignani were inseparables. They seemed to think, feel, and act as one man. Ushered into the sumptuously furnished private office of the brother who was on duty that day at the great business house, he received us in kindly fashion. He was a big, elderly man, with a shock of grey hair, and a somewhat chill and pompous manner. He spoke slowly, deliberately, choosing his words, meanwhile fixing his interlocutor with a pair of dark, keen eyes —a trick I have often noticed in men in positions of authority, the "generals" commanding companies of the rank and file in daily life. He appeared interested, in a somewhat severe and unconvinced way, in my hopes as an aspirant to the favour of Parisian musicians and amateurs. He thought an introduction to Berlioz was favourable, should Berlioz approve of my playing

—Berlioz being a critic of strong bias, but absolutely free from the venality which had crept into musical journalism. He warned us that there were critics—unfortunately a few prominent members of the dreaded craft—who were not above cajolery of different kinds, even the cajolery which sometimes appeals to those in far lower worldly positions of trust. In fact he gave us much valuable and necessary advice before he bowed us out—advice which depressed my mother, who always started by expecting the ultimatum of success, and somehow resented anything less with a sense of injury. As I had already learnt from often bitter experience that one of the greatest truths we do well, here below, to bear in mind is "Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed," I always secretly rejoiced when anything happened to clip the wings of those soaring anticipations of hers.

Mr. Galignani had done us good service. He did us still further good service. Calling at our hotel and leaving his brother's and sister's cards in the English way—he had already explained that Madame Galignani, his brother's wife, was so sadly an invalid that we must excuse her calling upon us—we received an invitation from Madame by the next post to dine with her to meet Monsieur Ferdinand de Lesseps.

Already there was talk in London of the bold inventor of the Suez Canal, and although we wondered at the juxtaposition of musicians such as ourselves with a shining light in the world's scientific development, we readily accepted.

The Galignanis' house was, in those days, a perfect

palace—great staircases and corridors, richly and softly carpeted, adorned with statues and paintings—a house half French, half English in its splendour, uniting British solidity with the lightness and grace of the highest-class Parisian taste. One gorgeous reception-room led into another. These beautiful chambers were hardly so costly in appearance (and in fact) as Henselt's semi-barbaric, magnificent suite of drawing-rooms at Schloss Gersdorf, but they recalled them to my memory.

Monsieur de Lesseps was present when we were ushered into the drawing-room, where a fairy-like old lady, seated in an invalid-chair, exquisitely dressed, pretty with her white hair and sweet, innocent old face, received us with many kindly smiles and words and welcoming pressure of her thin, cold hands. Lesseps was dark, thin, eager-looking—intellectual rather than handsome—although I remember a fine aquiline nose, well-marked brows, and a thick black moustache. But, seated between my mother and Mr. Anthony Galignani, who escorted her into the dining-room, he proved himself chivalrously amiable to the fair sex. He was evidently interested in her conversation, and was sufficiently humble to speak to her of his great enterprise. Indeed, he seemed to repeat history in her regard so far as to confide in her, as so many men had confided before who were even more important in the annals of our globe than he, and to take interest in her reminiscences of many great Englishmen he had only heard of, but she had seen and spoken with.

Round tables were used for dining then, in Paris. Indeed, we met with no others in important *ménages*.

The beautifully decorated table at the Galignanis'—softly lighted by shaded lamps—was picturesque. I was escorted to dinner by an English painter resident in Paris, Mr. William Wyld, the only real music-lover seemingly present, and when I played afterwards in a big drawing-room, he hung over the piano and seemed to like it. He afterwards introduced us to many well-known Parisian amateurs, and I remember several pleasant hours spent in his studio in the Rue Blanche. Even then, in 1861, he seemed to me to be elderly. But he lived many years after that, and when I called on him on my way to Nice with my babies in 1868, he did not look a day older than when we first met.

Having urgent recommendations to Chopin's pupils, Teleffsen, Fontana, and the Princess Czartoryska, we had not been many days in Paris before we made their acquaintance.

The first to call at our hotel was Teleffsen. He was fair almost to albinism, middle-aged, as a pupil who was also an intimate friend of Chopin's must naturally be in the sixties, but refined and courtly, even amiable in manner. He played to us, and insisted on my playing to him some of the master's works. He was encouraging as to my interpretation, but bitterly resented the interpolations which Henselt invariably introduced in his editions of the works of contemporary as well as of other composers. Henselt considered these editions of his *effectirt* (made effective). But the composers and their adherents thought his interference grossly insulting.

To Fontana—who although the pupil and friend of

Chopin, was not friendly with either Teleffsen or the Princess—these "effective" additions seemed like the proverbial red rag to a bull, as they naturally would be to the editor of the English edition of Chopin's works, published by the firm of Wessel (afterwards the firm of Ashdown & Parry, now Edwin Ashdown). He called upon us one evening. The extra candles hastily lit in our first-floor *salon* flickered upon a tall man in a fur coat, with close-cropped hair, a bristling moustache, lowering brows, and gleaming eyes. Gleaming teeth as he saluted us emphasised his somewhat wolfish aspect. The Count Fontana—doubtless a refugee—looked a typical indignant patriot. But he softened when I played him the Nocturnes studied from his professedly authentic edition. Only when I played the A minor valse, which Henselt had *effectirt* with a vengeance, was his temper roused. He declaimed against the impertinence, the sacrilegious profanity of Chopin's iconoclast. He went so far as to shake his fist at an imaginary Henselt in the distance. In fact, although he recovered himself with an effort, and assured us of his readiness to serve us in any way in his power, adding a word of warning against the Princess and her circle, who, he considered, sought to glorify themselves at the expense of the revered memory of the departed master, I felt at one with my mother when, the door safely shut upon him, she exclaimed, with a certain dread, "What an awful man!"

To me Chopin's surviving intimates seemed too far fully developed visionaries to be of much signal service in "keeping his memory green." Calling upon the Princess Czartoryska in her beautiful house in one of

the "avenues," she immediately received us, but there was only a note of reality about her when she warned us against Fontana.

We had been ushered into a white and gold and choicely decorated *salon*, where a pianoforte of concert dimensions occupied the centre of the floor, when the Princess—a spare little creature with a shadowy presence, a vague, far-away expression on her thin features and in her filmy eyes—came in, and in a dainty, ceremonious manner expressed herself pleased to welcome us. She deigned to speak of Chopin. But it was the Chopin connected with herself. She assured us, as we hailed from England, that we were not to attach any importance to a certain untrustworthy Monsieur de Fontana's edition of Chopin, published in London. "Fontana was truly arrogant. He had had little or nothing to do with Chopin. She herself, Monsieur Teleffsen, and some others, had been his trusted friends and pupils. And to us, Madame," she chanted, turning to my mother—there was an unreality in her very way of speaking, as if she were repeating a part in a play rather than talking of facts in real life —"to us he confided his manuscripts." Then she detailed the great difficulties they had had, these seemingly musical executors of his, in piecing together the fragments he had left in almost hopeless confusion. As she spoke, I seemed to see before me the fairy in the old tale who with a tap of her wand reduced the monstrous tangle the hapless heroine had been commanded to unravel to order and regularity.

Indeed, the Princess Czartoryska was more like an ancient fairy than an ordinary human being. She pro-

fessed herself interested in me as a musical aspirant charmed by the magician for whose memory she professed principally to exist. She indeed invited us in a general way to her receptions; but there seemed something unsubstantial and elusive about her. We did not frequent her *soirées*. We felt we had probably passed out of her mind altogether when we left the house.

There was something far more actual, tangible—more of a living, lasting experience—in our acquaintance with Berlioz.

One sharp winter's morning we drove—a long drive it was—to an inferior *quartier*, hardly the "Quartier Latin" of the students, but, I think, across the bridges, and found his house, where he lived *au cinquième*.

A slatternly maid-servant took our cards and the letter from the Broadwoods, then ushered us into a real musical critic's lair. Desks and tables were piled with newspapers, pamphlets, and papers, in the seemingly dusty confusion which, to their owner, often represents absolute order. There were bookcases of volumes—busts of musicians. One oil-painting—the "kitcat" portrait of a pretty woman with bunches of dark curls on either side of her oval face—hung over the mantelpiece. (This, we were afterwards informed, was the portrait of the English actress, Miss Henrietta Smithson, whom Berlioz had idealised, adored, married, and quarrelled with in a remarkably short space of time years before.)

We had not waited many minutes when a door at right angles with that by which we had been admitted opened, and a thin man in a tightly buttoned frock-

coat—a man of middle age, with dark hair curling at the ends brushed back from a high forehead, with penetrating eyes, an aquiline nose, and a pensive, sad expression about his delicate lips—entered, our cards and the letter open in his hand, and laying these aside, advanced, shook hands, and placed chairs for us; then, in the same slightly formal, if courtly manner, seated himself opposite, a writing-table between us, and began to talk—of course, in French.

He praised his "good friend, Monsieur Broadwood" —"ever the artists' friend"—then asked us if we knew his equally cherished *ami*, the "greatest critic in the world"—Monsieur Davison, of *The Times*.

We did not. The idea of the English critics hearing me before I bid for the favour of their Parisian brethren had been mooted, discussed, and dismissed.

Berlioz was sorry. But, he added, it was an acquaintance we were sure to make in the future, and perhaps it was always well to have a pleasure and privilege in prospect, as well as some in the immediate present.

As we talked—or rather as he and my mother talked —I had already learned that the *jeune demoiselle's* standing in France differed entirely, even in those mid-nineteenth-century days, from that of the English young girl beginning her grown-up existence—he unbent and became the amiable, clever dreamer that he looked, absolutely free from vanity and self-consciousness. I was an untried neophyte. My mother was, as far as he knew, but an ordinary everyday Englishwoman. But if we had been personages in any of the various worlds of art, literature, or science, the only recognised social worlds by a man of his calibre, he

could not have shown us greater interest or kindliness. When we took leave, he said, as he shook hands at the outer door, that in a few days he would have the pleasure of calling upon us at our hotel.

He came, visiting us at the worst possible moment for us, for we were dressing for an important dinner when he was announced. There was a scramble, a hasty temporary *toilette*, and we joined him in the *salon*, where, after a brief and somewhat formal conversation, he asked me to play to him.

I did so, choosing those pieces which went best on the Pleyel pianoforte. He said but little. But after my début he wrote me a laudatory article which excited the French musical circles, and, I think now, must certainly have excited some envy, for he was hard to please —at least, that was his reputation among Parisian executants.

In this article, after excusing himself for not having noticed concerts for some little time in his weekly feuilleton in the *Journal des Débats*, he began :—

"Mais il faut absolument que je parle de la Soirée donnée par Miss Alice Mangold dans le salon Erard. . . . Miss Mangold est une ravissante jeune Anglaise. Elle a des yeux de fauvette intimidée — elle approche du piano pourtant avec une douce assurance, et si elle ne s'en approchait pas, c'est le piano qui marcherait vers elle. . . ."

This and much more. I cull the, according to English critical ideas, extravagant sentences, because they were afterwards alluded to with much humour and wit in some of the English articles, to which I will refer in their place.

The Salle Erard! Before the day of my first public appearance I had found, to my bitter grief, that it was absolutely impossible for me to play my *bravura* pieces on a Pleyel instrument. I tried, I practised; only when the very date of the concert had to be fixed did I collapse before the impossible.

What was to be done? My mother, in despair, telegraphed to our faithful friend, Mr. Hipkins. He consulted the firm. She had suggested that a concert grand of theirs might be sent. She was unaware of the heavy monetary sacrifice such a proceeding would entail. It was midday when she wired. In the evening we received a message which read so funnily that even in my almost despair laughter made me remember the fleeting character of these worldly, fussy difficulties. The ridiculous conquered the semi-tragic, as it so often happily does in life.

The message began, "Impossible send *pipo*," and went on in an equally idiotic orthographic strain. We gathered that a letter of advice would follow—which it presently did—advising us, on the part of Mr. Henry Broadwood, to go to the Erards, where we accordingly repaired, and were most kindly received, not only by M. Schaeffer, Madame Erard's brother-in-law, who was sub-commander-in-chief in the splendid establishment in the Rue du Mail, but by the reigning queen, Madame Erard, herself, in the splendid suite of apartments on the first floor which was her Parisian *pied-à-terre*—the historic Château of La Muette at Passy being her principal residence.

No sooner were the Erard wings spread over us than several Erard adherents among musicians called and

proffered help—among them the pianist, Ernst Lubeck. I had heard Lubeck play at the Musical Union and other London concerts the previous season, and had felt one of my strong aversions alike to his personality and playing. He was a man of most peculiar appearance—tall, with a burly, high-shouldered build which, with his shaggy head, prominent eyes, and frog-like countenance suggested a human bull-frog.

Ella had raved about him both as man and artist, and not knowing enough of Ella in those days to be aware that to select and engage an artist was the preliminary to private as well as public rodomontades on those artists' perfections, I expected a Paladin in both person and art.

A portly artist who resembled a bull-frog more than anything else was repellent; but when he began to play, his playing was, to me—soaked in the mellifluous legato poetry of the arbitrary Henselt style—obnoxious, hateful.

Lubeck had a wooden style—of this there is little doubt. His tone was sharp, incisive; his interpretation of the greater masters, ancient and modern, correct to a fault, but without inspiration or romance. Although I came to be an almost slavish admirer of his personality as a human being, my opinion of him as a pianist deviated but very little from that first impression. He was to me as an executant as Meyerbeer and Weber were as composers—antagonistic.

The great Ella asked me, from the first, to write him my opinion of his new artists as they appeared at his concerts. Until the début of his much-lauded friend, Lubeck, I had been able to write to him mostly in

terms of complete ratification of his preaccount of his various stars. But I had promised absolute candour. So I wrote my true impression of Lubeck, man and pianist (bull-frog and all !) *And he showed my letter to Lubeck.*

If I had known of this, my consternation when Lubeck's card was brought us by the *garçon* one afternoon—the frost was over, it was raining—would have been greater than it was. For the mischievous imp who appears to delight in providing awkward coincidences at embarrassing moments in life arranged that I should happen to spill a whole cup of the *café au lait,* our consumption of which in the afternoon was doubtless credited in the hotel to our insular folly, upon the skirt of a smoke-coloured merino frock I wore "at home." It had just happened ; I was slightly scalded, and about to take flight into the bedroom to change, when—enter the noble bull-frog !

He was quite at his ease. I do not think the creature existed anywhere in the world who could disconcert Ernst Lubeck. And, as he was one of the largest-minded, most tolerant, and generous of human beings, there was not the slightest reason that he should ever be abashed before either creature or Creator.

He sat down by the round table in the centre of the room, and I sat opposite, in my dilemma, thankful that I could hold my scalding garments from inflicting worse than they had already contrived to make me endure, without being seen. He talked to my mother, of course, alluding to me, as they all did, as "Mademoiselle," instead of addressing me in the first person. But all the time he glanced at me with such an expres-

sion of amusement in his prominent grey-green eyes, twisting his moustache the while, that, not dreaming that Ella had traitorously betrayed my "privileged" letter, I quite believed he had seen my stained frock, and thought me a careless *backfisch* (the German term for adolescents).

To point a moral—in spite of readers' acknowledged dislike for literary moralising nowadays—I would really, as a friend to my kind, warn the more confiding among them to reflect considerably before they ever commit, in writing, their opinion of another to a third person. First of all, who, in this world of confused ideas of right and wrong, of responsibility, trust, and privilege, above all, of subtle temptation, *can* be trusted? We all know that the man who trusts himself is bound to come to grief in some way. Then why, if one cannot trust oneself, whom one knows slightly—far more slightly, always, than we imagine—trust another whom we do not, cannot, and never shall know?

Begging excuse for this digression, I assure my readers that I am by no means wasting their time by an account of Ernst Lubeck, for he was a remarkable man.

He was quite elder-brotherly; went into the details of my approaching concert at the Salle Erard, talked over mutual acquaintances in London, said he had heard from Ella about me and intended to be present at my début, lauded Madame Erard as a species of guardian angel, or perhaps good genius, of all pianists who sought the great firm, and departed—I, as I dared not budge an inch from behind the protecting table which

screened my dress catastrophe, speeding the departing guest with a slight bow. This stiffness of mine, I afterwards learnt from him, he had attributed to my loathing for him as a "human bull-frog." He had not noticed the state of my frock.

It would seem that the pianistic world of Paris was at that time *clique*-y to a fault. We were not at all astonished when, together with my sudden rejection of the Pleyel pianos (who could know my struggle to "do" with them, my postponement of their abandonment until the last possible moment?), the visits of the adherents of the firm ceased *in toto*. But we were surprised when the Erard pianists, from those who ranked then in Paris as Hallé and Arabella Goddard ranked in England, to the "rank and file," left their cards within a day or two after our visit to the great house in the Rue du Mail. Affairs in Paris moved with celerity then!

Who has aptly said "On revient, toujours, à nos premiers amours?" The sentence was quoted to me by the good, clever priest, Father James Connolly, years after, when "given over" by my doctor, he came to administer "extreme unction." . . . May it not be profane for me to say in the same breath that the dear, the beautiful instruments which were issued to the world from the Rue du Mail had been my first musical friends. Upon an Erard piano I had put my baby hands and played—I suppose by an inherited instinct, just as the pups of a carefully preserved strain among dogs repeat habits of their ancestors. It seemed second nature to play on a *young* Erard pianoforte once more. All old things—old human beings as well as

old objects—at least, one may say all the old creations of man as well as the old creations of God, have a family likeness. In violins age may be an advantage. Old pianofortes, no matter from what celebrated makers' workshops they have emerged, are—well, should be considered as hopelessly in their dotage, only ready for extinction.

In the practical work for my approaching concert we had been helped by an old friend of my father's in his first days in England, Emile Ettling, a then (in our time) well-known Parisian writer of dance music, but with also an agreeable rank among all musicians of the lighter walks of the profession. He introduced us to printers, newspaper editors, and instrumentalists and singers we required for the *soirée*, for I was to begin the programme with Henselt's favourite quintet of Hummel, which I had played with him at Gersdorf, he playing the instrumental part on a second piano. (One or two of Hummel's works had escaped Henselt's wholesale anathema.)

The day arrived. Rehearsal was to be in the morning, on the platform of the Erard Concert Saloon. It went off famously. M. Schaeffer sat in the first row of the *fauteuils*, and at its close came to us with kind and encouraging words, prognosticating a complete success.

Alas! as usual, as it invariably happened, and has happened, throughout my life, I was to be handicapped at a crucial moment.

My "over-practice," as all pianists then and since have designated from nine to a dozen hours' strenuous work *per diem*, had some time previously produced that

lesion called a "ganglion" on my right hand. I had fought against its increase in size by constant iodine paintings, without any real success. At the close of the rehearsal I was entering our *voiture de remise* when I slipped, and my right hand struck against the small iron step. I felt a sharp pain, but did not dream of what had really happened until, drawing off my gloves (always worn large because of the ganglion), I saw the lump had disappeared, and that my hand had assumed a dropsical appearance.

Horror! I said little to my mother. My hand felt stiff; my fingers did not respond as usual to my will. But setting myself to play through my programme, I was relieved to find that the evil was not so great as I first had feared it might prove to be.

Perhaps my anxiety was a make-weight against any other nervousness. As I dressed in my pink silk robe, and my mother pinned the monstrosity of flapping pink and silver leaves the dressmaker had sent "to be worn" upon my curls—my hair curled naturally still in those days—I felt bold as a lion and quite calm.

Arrived, the crimson, gold, and white Salle Erard looked charming, already three-quarters filled with auditors. Soon there was only standing room. A few sentences in the *Journal des Débats* had aroused curiosity. The Quintet of Hummel went off capitally. My right hand was refractory, but manageable. Then came a song—I cannot remember the name of the lady vocalist, but she was one Parisian audiences well knew. I had the bulk of the entertainment on my shoulders, spurred in its accomplishment by seeing, in the *loge* reserved for Madame Erard—a kind of stage-box close

to the platform and opposite the door by which artists ascended it—not only Madame Erard, her sister and niece and M. Schaeffer, but Lubeck, watching me intently.

The programme was virtually at an end. I was to put the "finis" to it by a solo of two numbers. One was, I think, one of Henselt's more romantic, dreamy pieces; the second, I know, was the A minor study of Chopin, which, with its flights of *presto* passages, is a veritable *tour de force* for the strongest physically-gifted pianist to attempt.

The Henselt went well. So did the A minor study for the first and following pages, but its length demands a reserve of force. To my consternation, my hand, which had hitherto answered to the helm—my determined will—up to that point, suddenly "struck," would not move, was like a dead thing hanging to my arm.

I stopped short. I looked at the audience in blank despair. They, doubtless thinking my memory had failed me—little dreaming that any débutante pianist would dare to face an audience and attempt to play through a programme with a disabled right hand—began to applaud vigorously. When I felt collapsed, and rising, staggered off more dead than alive, they applauded still more. . . .

In my fainting state in the screened-off recess which served as an artist's room, a storm of steady, vehement applause intermingled with encouraging cries from a generous audience, whose sympathies had evidently gone out wholesale to the fragile young *Anglaise* who had journeyed to their capital to appeal for their suffrages, roused me from my brief unconsciousness.

Then I felt myself raised by something strong; I heard a voice, "Give her air—leave her to me."

I glanced up and saw the Bull-frog, his face set in a stern but kindly expression.

"Drink this *eau sucrée*," he commanded. (Since Henselt, no one had spoken to me so sharply.) "You *must* come back to the platform and play again. You *must!*"

I showed him my hand, which was literally black and blue, and explained. "It was mad, mad, to attempt that *étude*," he exclaimed. "But come, come! Play anything—something small. They will not go until they have seen you. Shall I go and tell them about your hand?"

"No, no," I cried. I knew they would think me a fool, and although I always knew in my "heart of hearts" that I was of all fools ever born into this world the greatest, I shrank from letting that world know it in advance. "I will go and play."

I gave a glance of sincere pity at my mother, weeping in the background, consoled by some ladies who had forced their way in and refused to be gainsaid (I do believe Frenchwomen are the very sweetest, humblest, most tender and sympathetic women in the world); I took the arm of the man and artist I had so bitterly vilified to his English patron, Ella, and, going back to the piano amid the excited shouts of congratulation from my auditors, who, jumping at conclusions, probably thought I had died of my ordeal, played the very first piece Henselt taught me—the miniature gem which has always been most appreciated by the greatest musicians, his "Petite Valse."

The good audience "cheered me to the echo." I had to come again and again to curtsy my thanks for their indulgence. Each time I curtsied they renewed their applause. I think my curtsy, the then "court curtsy," which, as a young child, I had been taught by the aristocratic dance-mistress, Miss Mary Birch, was new to them on a concert platform, and anything new appeals to any kind of a Parisian public. In any case, if I had subtly planned beforehand how to make a vivid impression in Paris, the "sensation" could hardly have been produced so aptly as by this "unrehearsed effect."

I was, however, suffering from complete nervous collapse, and, next day, could only remember of the journey to the hotel that I had felt some protecting strength upholding mine—as I used to do when my grandfather was caring for me—although Lubeck had escorted us home, and half carried me to my room.

Next day he called, and as it was second nature to me to speak just what I felt, I added, to my thanks for his kindness, that he had been just to me what my grandfather used to be.

He laughed, and turning to my mother, said, "Mademoiselle is an adept in compliments," then, without further comment, proposed to us that I should give a second concert. He knew, now, exactly what, in my peculiar style, would please a Parisian audience best, and tax my powers least. If he could be of any assisttance to us in any other way we were to command him.

My mother, when I urged his idea after he had left, scouted it as absolutely impossible. We had spent our *ultimatum*, or would have spent our last available *louis* when we arrived in London. My father, so helpless a

man in practical matters that from the earliest days of their marriage his dutiful wife had literally been his valet, was writing piteously of his embarrassments in daily life. But some good friends came to the rescue.

I alluded to a Mr. Hertz, a great art-patron and connoisseur, and his family, as friends of my mother's in the first difficult days of her married life. Mr. and Mrs. Hertz had sons, but it was their two daughters who were specially celebrated for their intellectual powers, the brilliancy of their conversational gifts, their music, and their potent charm. The elder, who was renowned for her exquisite piano-playing, had contracted a love-marriage with her cousin. The second, Clara, had married Mr. Thomson, a great engineer—I believe, the inventor of the road-engine—and was staying in Paris with her husband and parents in an entresol *appartement* in the Rue Rivoli. Calling upon us a few hours after Lubeck's visit, the subject of his proposition—which, it seemed, had been discussed after the *soirée* with Madame Erard—was alluded to. Both Mr. and Mrs. Thomson warmly approved the idea, and generously invited me to stay with them until I had appeared a second time in the French capital. My mother yielded. A few days later I had seen her depart, and was established as a guest in Mr. Thomson's home.

On her farewell visit to Madame Erard, my mother had been assured by that true patron of artists that she would look upon me as her temporary child—a promise she religiously fulfilled to the letter. The Thomsons had (fortunately for them, as I was with them) no piano. So I lived more in the Rue du Mail than in the Rue

Rivoli. Arriving in the morning, I had my choice of pianofortes to practise upon. M. Schaeffer "looked me up" once or twice; and when I consented to be cajoled into sparing an hour to take *déjeuner* with them, I had a pleasant interlude in Madame Erard's gorgeous apartments, and in the no less gorgeous second-floor *étage* of M. and Madame Schaeffer. Sundays I spent mostly at the Maison Erard. Madame kept open house for her pianistic protégés and privileged relatives and friends. At the (I think six o'clock) dinner, covers were invariably laid for the *enfants de la maison*, one of whom was Ernst Lubeck. It was under Madame Erard's truly hospitable roof that my programme was arranged by Lubeck. He chose the pieces, and frequently heard me play them. Berlioz's article had led other critics of less importance to follow his example, and give the English girl who chose to enter art through the gates of Paris warm encouragement in their columns in the daily and weekly papers. There was a considerable demand for admission to my second concert—a matinée. I had not the slightest fear. I was establishing my claim to the natural weakness of my sex—morally leaning upon a man.

At that time I weakly leant, I fear, upon many stronger natures. My host, Mr. Thomson, could not have been more solicitous on my behalf had I been a cherished young sister. He would rise to preside at my early breakfast, and inquire into my prospects of luncheon, giving me sage advice as to the maintenance of physical strength as the most important factor in my success at my forthcoming concert. I was managing

my technical business—the printing, preliminary advertisements, and the rest—myself. Lubeck had readily yielded that amount of responsibility. I did not assimilate the French idea of the young girl who must not budge an inch without *chaperonage*. I went fearlessly about Paris interviewing all and sundry—finding every man a sort of fatherly knight, from the editors in their offices to the *cochers* of the commonest *fiacre*, and the lowest of the porters in the Rue du Mail. My experience, indeed, of my wanderings—an English girl of sixteen, absolutely alone in Paris in 1861—has given me an opinion of the chivalrous honour of Frenchmen towards our sex which nothing could shake or disturb.

The concert took place. Lubeck constituted himself master of the ceremonies—took me on, and off, and "turned over" for me. Everything went off well. I was neither fatigued nor excited.

I was to leave Paris in a few days. On the 27th of February I was practising in the "petit Salon," where the pianists who were established professors frequently gave their lessons, when a tap came at the glass door. Drawing the curtain, I saw Lubeck.

"I cannot offer you my felicitations to-morrow" (my birthday—only casually mentioned, he had remembered it!), "so I have come to-day," he said, seating himself on the big sofa behind the grand piano and motioning me to his side. "I have to offer you a birthday present."

I expected to see him extract some object, for which I should only, I well knew, care because it was his gift, from one of the pockets of his overcoat, stuffed full,

generally, of gloves, programmes, letters, cigar-cases. But instead, he gave me a keen, comical look.

"Myself," he said. "Don't you understand?"

"No," I said, utterly bewildered. I had come to the conclusion that of all human beings I had as yet met, this man I had called a bull-frog had most mastered me, body, soul, mind, and heart, but that he had suspected the fact—as I began, with consternation, to believe—had not entered my head.

"My dear child," he began gently, taking my hand. "I never meant to marry. But—I woke up one day with the idea that I should do well to marry a dear little girl—you know who it is! You are very young" (once more that horrible youth I could not, seemingly, get the better of, dogged my happiness), "but I think you are fond of me, and I know I am fond of you!"

It was not a lover's offer. There was neither sentiment nor passion. I felt that no romancist whose works I had read would have dreamt of anything so commonplace. But such relief and joy had taken possession of me—when I awoke at nights, the thought of being parted from my now worshipped protector was so unbearable that if, instead of speaking, he had flung down his glove for me to pick up, I should have done it—that emotion such as I felt could not be hidden. Without any actual reply, he read my "yes" in my face, my whole outward self.

We had—for a *tête-à-tête* between a man and a *jeune demoiselle* the very idea of whose solitary converse with any being of the opposite sex was to Parisian minds "shocking," a word creeping into fashionable slang even then—a long talk. If, he said, I had not had

a worse ordeal before me—the facing English audiences who were, he considered, educated in two different grooves—by Mr. Chappell in the Monday Popular Concerts to believe that there were only two pianists in the world, Hallé and Arabella Goddard, and by Ella to doubt that any musician of English birth and breeding was worth the snap of a finger—he would have waited to tell me his wishes until he arrived in England, in May or June, when he would first have consulted my parents. But he thought it well for me to have some settled future in view, it would steady me to go through what I had to go through. "I think I know you better than you know yourself," he said, "you bundle of nerves! No physique would ever bear the strain of your too active brain. You ought to be wrapped in cotton-wool, and only taken out and looked at now and then."

Nothing was to be said or done in the matter of the engagement until he arrived in London. We were to correspond—I was to write freely to him of all that befell. There could be, I may add, no difficulty in the matter of language. Lubeck had travelled for some years in both North and South America, and had completely mastered the English language. The Dutch, too, can almost rival the Russians in aptitude for assimilating foreign tongues.

Before we parted, he whimsically led me to the big mirror over the fireplace, and, placing his arm round me, said, "What an absurd contrast!"

I did not think it absurd, if extreme. He was big, burly, his iron-grey hair (of which, for many years after, I preserved a lock) thrown carelessly back, his

sea-green eyes, with their reddened lids, surrounded by many lines, while I, with my thin body, looking all the slenderer in my new French frock of chocolate colour scattered with rosebuds and neat collar and cuffs, my very fair hair covered by a black chenille net with a heavy tassel, looked like a fly against his broad shoulders.

They say (how much is sometimes conveyed in that expression, "they say"!), it might be rather expressed that the superstitious among us say, that for two people who have any idea of being joined together in that bond which the Anglican Church service declares "no man should put asunder" to look at themselves before marriage in a glass, is "unlucky."

It may be. In any case, it was the first and last time I saw myself near to Ernst Lubeck.

A day or two afterwards I left Paris to begin my English campaign.

CHAPTER IX

IN the happy childhood days at Aveley, I was literally "ravished" by a brief glimpse of a girl who exactly corresponded with my ideal of feminine beauty.

Mr. Philip Button, afterwards Mr. Freman—he had had to change his name together with the inheritance of a fortune, and resigned himself to a name he disliked by docking the second *e* and asking every one to call him Fremman—had married, secondly, one of a family of very beautiful girls. Among his married sisters-in-law was a Mrs. de Witte, the widow of an aristocrat among Dutchmen; and Mrs. de Witte and her daughter Mary stayed frequently at Stifford Lodge.

I shall never forget my first sight of Mary de Witte. I had arrived with my elder sister to "spend the day" with Fanny, the oriental-looking daughter of Mr. Button-Freman and his lately deceased second wife. We were seated on the wide lawn, under a chestnut tree, and I saw a lovely creature cross that green sward with a graceful step.

The vision rendered me almost dumb. Mary de Witte was then about eighteen; slight, her figure was beautifully curved, and a swan-like neck upheld a classic little head "running over with curls" of a pale, burnished gold. I remember she was wearing a dress

of the "shot" silk which had then just come into fashion, it was "shot" pale pink and blue.

At luncheon I saw her close. She had large blue eyes under her fair, pencilled brows. Her mouth was set in the most delicious curves. It was one of those angel faces which are a painter's despair—for never can brush and paint and canvas reproduce such living and breathing loveliness—a loveliness which photography seems to enjoy the demolition of.

She was very kind to me in an elder-sisterly, protective way. I was confused and abashed in the presence of perfection. I often dreamt of the lovely creature. But I first saw her again in Paris during that eventful two months when I made my début as a pianist.

Mrs. and Miss de Witte were staying at the Hôtel Castiglione, a fact we only discovered just before my first concert. Still, I saw much of them, considering my long hours of study. I preferred a quiet hour or two with those I admired—for with me admiration and love were one, as were gratitude and love, esteem and love, pity and love—to any sight-seeing. Life was too formidable to me, for me to enjoy, as those without responsibilities enjoy, sights and sounds. During two months in Paris I saw—the Madeleine, which I thought more like a heathen temple than a Christian church, the picture-galleries of the Louvre, the Bois, and the church at the end of the street which contained our hotel, Notre Dame de Lorette, where I induced my mother to accompany me nearly every night to meditate and pray.

Mrs. de Witte's time was her own. She was quite a

globe-trotter, a cosmopolitan, but generally spent some months each year in England to see her relations, among whom, being bright, handsome, witty, with a youthful interest in every one and everything which made her seem more like a girl than a woman approaching old age, she was ever welcome. She was a chum as well as an admirer of my grandfather's—they were, indeed, kindred spirits. She readily volunteered to postpone her journey to London until I could travel under her wing, and to be with her and the beautiful Mary, whom to look at was an education, was a support and comfort to me in the inevitable parting from the man who had proved himself in one short month as cherishing a protector of my girlhood as my grandfather Vidal of my infancy.

We stayed at a big hotel near the beach at Boulogne, and spent the next day with some friends of the de Wittes, who had an English-looking house in a broad street leading uphill to the cathedral, crossing the Channel late and arriving in London after midnight.

As I drove through the City streets by moonlight I was struck by the breadth and ponderous stability of the buildings, in contrast with the narrow, theatrical-looking erections of Paris in those early Second Empire days. There was the stolidity, the suggestion of passive strength about the English capital which an impregnable fortress produces upon one's mind. After unconsciously noticing the haphazard, ornamental, flamboyant tendency of modern Paris, this staid, neat, determined-looking London brought a sense of confidence and relief. A city is typical of its inhabitants. If the gay, ephemeral Paris and her pleasure-loving

children had a mind for the young English stranger, might I not expect encouragement from London, and from the English people among whom I was born and bred? My whole being answered confidently, "Yes."

After my mother had heard, in strictest privacy, all the experiences I could not relate by letter, we proceeded at once to business. We called upon Ella to ascertain at which concert he intended to produce me, according to promise.

He received us with effusion. (He had already written one of his spasmodic notes—one of congratulation, after my Parisian début.) He said he had never been so delighted in his life as when he heard I had elected to play upon the Erard pianos. "There are practically no other instruments for a real artist to play upon," he went on, indulging in a prolonged eulogy, which included "that woman among women, Madame Erard." He had felt great dislike to the idea of having any other pianos on his platform, but, "of course, on occasion, one must pay toll to one's country in sacrifices of personal opinion, as one pays toll in the matter of the over-taxation imposed upon the unlucky British. He had brought himself to resignation on the subject of a Broadwood at the Musical Union; but now, of course, that I was with the Erards, everything was different."

My mother explained that I was still playing on Broadwood. The situation had been stated to Madame Erard first of all, and she had volunteered that it would be a personal grief to her if, in London and England, I did not do my best for a generous firm whose proffered aid in supplying pianos for my student life had smoothed its troubles and difficulties.

The little man's Punch-like visage became grotesque, as he practically anathematised us as fools. He "shilly-shallied" in vague statements of the most marvellous foreign pianists who were bidding for appearance during the ensuing season at his concerts. They all played on Erard. It was really a serious question, this, which had arisen. My mother reminded him that when he had actually chartered me for a début there had been no question of pianofortes. He said he could say nothing until he had considered the matter. He warned us that to be *enfant de la maison* at Madame Erard's, and then to return to London and appear in public as an adherent of the rival house of Broadwood, was madness. "Between the two stools I must fall to the ground."

We returned home confounded. My mother had in some way conceived the fixed idea that at the Musical Union I must appear, or fail.

I wrote to Lubeck. He evidently wrote off to Ella. From both I consequently received the offer of appearing at the "grand extra matinée," when he, Lubeck, was to play, and when the large platform, which would hold two concert grands, would be used.

This "extra matinée" of Ella's was given at the close of his season, at the beginning of July. The question now was, whether I was to wait until the final days of the London season for a first public appearance, which, in my own interests, ought to be at its very beginning.

Mr. Broadwood was consulted. After some little consideration, his advice was not to let the slight stir which had been made among the London musical and

critical world anent a young girl pianist hailing from London, but who was entirely a "dark horse" to all the English musicians and professors, to subside without immediate result. It was decided that as soon as possible I should give a concert.

I was determined to do all the business part myself. After such details conducted successfully in a foreign tongue in a foreign city, the arrangement of a concert in one's native London was a mere bagatelle. I took the Hanover Square Rooms—no longer existent—for the morning of April 17th. I drew up the advertisements, engaged the artists, instrumental and vocal. My man singer was Mr. W. H. Cummings, then a mere beginner, whose voice and method had fascinated me when he sang "The Pilgrim of Love" at a parish concert in St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, schoolroom. I knew Mr. Cummings by his voice alone, but I had determined then and there that he should sing at my first concert. He seemed surprised and gratified at such an outside demand for his services—his appearances were then infrequent—and only charged me three guineas.

The printing, sending out preliminary programmes, then tickets, meant work. The excellent printers, Messrs. Goulburn, showed me a new coloured paper for shop bills, which, strangely enough, was the primrose tint of the covers of my first book, *Wild Spring Flowers*. I chose it at once, and as soon as the bills were ready, visited all the music-sellers of any consequence in London, asking them as a favour to give these bills a prominent place in both their windows and shop interiors. They were invariably most kind,

and in twenty-four hours musical people were surprised to see a crop of these unexpected primrose announcements of an unknown pianist blazing at them in all their business haunts.

Before the concert Mr. Broadwood invited Mr. H. F. Chorley, the fastidious, dogmatic, and depreciatory critic of the *Athenæum*, to hear me play in the room used for rehearsals in Great Pulteney Street. My mother and I were there first—I was always somewhat feverishly punctual. We were talking with Mr. Hipkins when the massive doors were rolled back, and Mr. Broadwood entered with a tall, spare man, whose twisted features, blinking eyes, and yellow-white hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes lent him an uncomfortable likeness to an ourang-outang. When Ella afterwards acidly said, "What on earth did they want you to play to that sick monkey for?" I could not blame his simile.

He was polite, if not somewhat coldly gracious. He asked me questions about my study under Henselt, and seemed surprised at its brevity; hinting, however, that as Henselt's public appearances seemed to have been marred by "breaking down" (I used to groan inwardly with the wearisome iteration of this tradition whenever my eccentric master was mentioned), perhaps under the circumstances it might be as well. There was some talk of Paris, its musicians, and the critics, during which Mr. Broadwood, I could see, became a trifle fidgety—if one may dare suggest such a thing when speaking of a man who was complete master of himself in every way. He ended Mr. Chorley's sneering comments on the venal musical press of Paris by suggesting that I should play.

I sat down before a big concert grand, Chorley at my side. The others retreated into the background. I suggested different pieces of various composers, and Chorley chose this and that. He made no remark whatever until he had tested me with the final movement of Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto, which brought my "recital" to an end.

Then, first hearing the Henselt rules and blaming them severely, he spoke very kindly of my artist nature, of my seemingly natural appreciation of Chopin, and of my past work, which, he at once detected, had been severer in self-infliction than it could possibly have been under tutorship. I remember something he said which I hugged to my very soul; it seemed to comfort me so, coming from a man who, exclusive, detested, feared, must have been a great critic to have soared triumphantly over all his enemies to the very end.

"I have the greatest belief in self-tuition," he said. "Meanwhile, the student who is at the same time his own master is more cruel and unreasonable to himself than any other human being, however harsh, could possibly be. I see overwork in everything you do. It is a mercy you have escaped being your own executioner."

Then he condemned the Henselt method—the tight wrist, the ignoring of all physiological facts in regard to muscles and joints—with a wholesale condemnation which was dispiriting. "Unless you alter your system you will never play any quick movement of Mendelssohn's," was one of his final speeches.

After our interview I expected something caustic in his review of my English début, instead of which his

article in the *Athenæum* I valued as one of my most precious encouragements.

The day of the concert came; it was fine and warm. The sale of the tickets had already covered all expenses, leaving an agreeable margin. I wore the white muslin frock I had had made in Paris for my second concert—with an idea of correcting the horrible impression the pink silk abortion, with its huge, flapping leaf decoration, must have produced upon my feminine Parisian auditors. At least, I thought, I will look a clean and wholesome object. My mother insisted on Isidore, the fashionable Regent Street *coiffeur*, being engaged to dress my hair. I had to submit; but I grudged the hour. There were still many minor details to be attended to, and the good old grey-haired Jewish concert-ticket manager, van Praagh, was clamouring for instructions below while my leisurely French *coiffeur* was still heating and manipulating tongs. And when the tedious operation was over, and I looked in the glass, I thought I had never seen anything uglier than myself in all my life.

"After all, the play's the thing!" I mentally cried, and started for the concert, my hopes riveted upon the performance. But I shall never forget my sensations as the hired brougham drove into Hanover Square and halted at the entrance to the rooms. It was a solemn moment. I remembered only too well how my grandfather had spoken of my responsibilities as the future head of the little family if my father collapsed. At that date the dear, good man seemed well and cheerful, and his business, rebounding after the lifting of war's pressure, was fairly flourishing. But—who knew how long it

would last? Passionate prayer went up from my soul to Heaven for strength to go through my first appeal to a British public with success—and my prayer was answered.

I was collected, calm, and stoically endured the anguish of being hoisted upon a platform to interest a public who had paid to hear me play—more, to satisfy them that their outlay had been justified by their consequent entertainment—without my inward suffering affecting either my playing or my outward self.

It was from first to last, that first concert of mine, a decorous affair. The artists' room had more the atmosphere of a vestry during some church function than the withdrawing-room of public performers. The audience was chiefly aristocratic. I only felt a shudder of apprehension once—just at the close—when good Mr. Hipkins, standing near me on the stairway leading to the platform, said, "There goes Davison!" and I saw the man whose *fiat* I secretly dreaded limping out on the arm of Howard Glover, the musical critic of the *Morning Post*, at least I saw the back of his bald head, with the wisps of black hair dragged across.

I had not expected that the great Jupiter critic, whose opinion had then as much weight throughout the educated world as the great newspaper he wrote for, would deign to be present at the matinée of a neophyte. In those days the few "benefit concerts" that were given each season were not noticed in *The Times*. A few years ago, when I had to search its columns for records of the early sixties, I found that there was only a weekly *feuilleton* written by

Davison, after the manner of the principal French daily papers, and that this weekly article often included the operatic doings of the seven days, as well as those of the Philharmonic and other important musical societies.

But next morning, I was dressing, when a hansom literally dashed up to the door, and after a few minutes my mother entered, *The Times* in hand. Mr. Hipkins had brought it. Davison had starred me out by giving me an article, a eulogistic, thoughtful article, to myself.

There was no delay in the jackals following the lion of the musical press. Those days were not these, when each unit has the confidence to think for itself. The motto then was, "Follow my leader." Different schools of opinion, and ramifications of these schools, abounded; and each school had its commander-in-chief, each branch its subordinate leader. Chorley led a very small and distinct company, the aristocrats of musical thought. Davison was President of the republic. The two seldom coincided. What was Davison's meat was mostly poison to Chorley; but on occasion they felt the same. Their detestation of Richard Wagner, who had just suffered his first signal defeat in Paris, was literally howled to the public in the *Athenæum* and the weekly columns of *The Times* allotted to Davison. When Adelina Patti shone upon the world in full and unexpected splendour, enmities and antagonisms shrivelled in her sunshine. And in, a minor matter, these two great critics agreed on the subject of myself.

Howard Glover, one of the redoubtable family

sprung from the clever actress, was then critic of the *Morning Post.* He was evidently slightly irritated by the French criticisms, and while encouraging me personally, compared Berlioz's article in the *Débats* to "the class of wit with which Molière blames a fever for having injured a young princess after having been *logée chez elle.*"

To be brief, I had made a success, and had become the talk of musical circles. I played in several concerts that season. But Ella, as soon as my concert was over, had written to my mother in an offended strain because she had "directly ignored his advice." He was sorry "she had taken the law into her own hands, and made the egregious mistake of appealing to the public by that refuge of the destitute, a so-called 'benefit concert.' He had never yet allowed an artist to appear at the 'Musical Union' who had previously given a 'benefit concert' in London, and he regretted that he must recall his offer of an engagement for his 'grand extra matinée.'"

My mother's anger was—my mother's anger. I laughed. My ordeal was over; my suspense and secret terrible anxiety at an end. The critics had accepted me. If I had appeared first at Ella's, the critics would have ignored me. Ella had the ear of the few—the critics dictated to the many. Well, I preferred the many.

That summer season was full for me, not only of public, but of private appearances. Musical amateurs who had allowed their friendship or acquaintance with my mother to drift into practical non-existence appeared like butterflies in a sunny spring. I was,

indeed, in my sunny springtide, and butterflies seemed natural. Serjeant Sargood and his accomplished wife, who, as the contralto Miss Flower, had been an intimate of my parents in their more conspicuous days, chartered us for their weekly receptions. Mrs. Sargood, kind, good-natured to a fault, was a lion-hunter. Painters, lawyers, composers, executants, novelists, writers, spiritualists, actors, and actresses—any one who was mentioned in public at the moment might be found at her weekly, crowded receptions in Endsleigh Street.

There I met such opposite beings as Miss Amelia B. Edwards, the renowned Egyptologist and authoress, and Mr. Home, the spiritualist, the "lights of the law," and artists and actresses.

Miss Edwards I had noticed as a charming young lady with a beauty and intellectuality of face, yet there was a certain self-containedness of manner when she spoke to me, with an encouraging smile, which shrivelled me up. If ever I met critical, searching eyes with mine, my mental being seemed to retreat and become a nothing. Hers were critical eyes. Mrs. Sargood took care to tell me that when Miss Edwards saw me enter the room, she said to herself, "That girl is a poet!" But that made any further intercourse between us, as far as I was concerned, impossible.

Mr. Home was tall, lanky, ashen pale, with fair hair thrown back in careless confusion, and large, transparent blue eyes, which, even when fixed upon an object, seemed to see through it into the mystic Beyond. He would sit on some more uncomfortable seat, his long limbs hanging about him, as it were, his peculiar

head supported by his attenuated white hand, and seemingly stare into the infinite. I thought, as I looked at him, that he was only doing what we all could do, and did on occasion do, only hardly in a crowded drawing-room, where our simple duty appeared to be to take part in the mutual entertainment of hosts and guests. So when I was introduced to him, and he informed me he had asked to be introduced because in me he recognised "a medium," I had never felt less mediumistic.

All my life, I told him, I had longed, wearied for any token that our ideas of the spirit-world had some foundation in fact. I had dared so far as to summon spirits. But I had neither seen, nor heard, nor felt, *with my bodily senses*, anything that was not natural, material.

I could have added, Oh man! As if spirit could be perceived except by spirit, absolutely apart from the flesh, the substance of matter; as if anything so far above gross matter would make matter its "medium," when through God, and in God, and in no other way, can spirit communicate with spirit! But I was only an insignificant girl, he was a well-known man, so, as Juliet's nurse said, I "stinted."

I did not become one of Mr. Home's adherents. Most interesting personalities were the youthful and promising Mr. (now Sir George) Lewis, who came often with his charming bride, and Mr. Marcus Stone and his sisters. There were also Elizabeth Philp, singer, song writer, and marvellously gifted woman in many ways, her great friend, the actress, Miss Cushman, and, in relays, the musical lights of the season.

Delightful evenings, when, after the "feast of reason

and the flow of soul," a dainty sandwich supper was served in the dining-rooms below! Mrs. Sargood had the rare tact to make of a crowd of strangers an assemblage of friends. This, I imagine, is the peculiar gift of the hostesses who have created *coteries* and presided over *salons*. In the sixties these supreme hostesses had comparatively easy work, granted their special capacity to start with. But when I think of what these "queens of society" have to cope with in this twentieth century of a multiplication of anarchies, I feel that the genius which can make anything now of the heterogeneous crowds ought literally to be crowned.

Another distinguished lady who actually went so far as to seek me was Miss Virginia Gabriel, who then divided the feminine song-writing laurels with the gentle and beautiful "Claribel." She belonged to Chorley's little world, and while "Claribel" delighted the multitude, she was more admired by the *cognoscenti*. Living in Wilton Place with her father, General Gabriel, she held weekly musical receptions in the afternoon, and her drawing-rooms, of somewhat limited size, were crowded with musical celebrities and eager amateurs. Tall, spare, interesting rather than charming —as "Claribel" essentially was—Miss Gabriel had the queenly air of those who, appraising their value correctly, wear their coronet with dignity. Later, this clever woman, who was a valued friend of the fastidious Chorley's, married, and some years afterwards had a tragic end, being thrown from her carriage and killed.

Then there was a Mrs. Anderson—the daintiest, prettiest lady, of somewhat over middle age—who had been my parents' friend years before, and who, with

her only surviving daughter Helen (afterwards Mrs. Henniker Heaton), had been present at my sister's marriage. At her charming house in Hamilton Place, St. John's Wood, she gave delightful dinners. I had been the child friend, in our nursery days, of the daughter Marian who died of gastric fever at twelve years old, and with tears in her eyes she used to kiss me and say, "I love you for yourself, of course, but I love you for Marian's sake." One day she took me to Marian's grave, which was, I think, in Highgate Cemetery.

As a matter of fact, Marian's and my friendship consisted in quarrels. When we were toddling babies, she was very ambitious and anxious to speak plainly, and although we were neither of us able to articulate properly, used to correct me and boast of her own superiority, which made me shy of visiting the Anderson nurseries. But the elders are mostly profoundly ignorant of the heart-burnings and altercations of the nursery world.

The shadow of Marian's loss did not somehow mar my happiness when staying in Hamilton Place. Celebrities I might like to meet were invited to the choice little dinners—then called *dîners à la Russe*, but which subsequently became so popular that at this day, even in the commonest English household, flowers deck the table, and all heaviness suggestive of overwhelming lumps of meat, boiled vegetables, and stodgy pudding masses are banished by housekeepers, attenuated as their means may possibly be.

The mornings before the dinners Mrs. Anderson drove me in either brougham or barouche (victorias

were not general then in London) to choose the various items at the West End shops. I chose the menus, also the flowers and fruit in Covent Garden, which we brought ourselves in the carriage, as well as other dainties.

One dinner was given to the Benedicts. Sir Julius's two daughters, then unmarried, were amiable as well as striking girls. I admired Alice, the youngest, enormously. She was finely developed, with beautiful hair and great, dark, impressive eyes; but what struck me most was her fearless self-confidence. Her elder sister was more retiring. Alice Benedict married young a man whose name I forget, but who was given to me as escort into dinner some years later, when I and my husband were invited by Sir Sydney and Lady Waterlow to a dinner given for "Jenny Lind" (Madame Goldschmidt) at the Mansion House. On that agreeable occasion I found him very amiable, as, indeed, I did my neighbour on the right, Karl Blind. I was astonished, some years later, when he and his wife had some marital disagreement which entailed appearance in the Law Courts.

Handsome, dark-eyed Alice Benedict! She passed away young—peace be to her manes!

Another personage I met at the Anderson dinners was the renowned preacher, Bellew, who was then attracting overflowing congregations to the church he preached in at the end of Hamilton Place.

I had not heard him speak, although I had heard of his learning, eloquence, and extraordinary fascination for his hearers. In those days photography was still in its earlier developments—shop windows did not blaze

with portraits of celebrities—so I had not been prepared for so striking a personality as his. Tall, finely developed, he had a healthy complexion, and such fine, dark eyes and brows, that the contrast of a head of hair white as silver was as little suggestive of age as the old-fashioned powder, or white wig, can have been in times gone by.

I had a very formed idea of priests and the priesthood —albeit I was not yet a Catholic—and although no one could deny that the renowned Bellew was one of the most genial, brilliant, and interesting of men, there was nothing about his personality at all suggestive of the cleric. His conversation at the dinner-table, for instance, was that of one who, above and beyond everything else, was a *gourmet*. He first descanted on the treatment of venison, especially a fresh haunch, discussing theories of various culinary authorities whose opinions he quoted, chapter and verse, and priding himself on having invented a new kind of pasty which would, if accepted by the *chefs*, cast all others into the background. Then, after other topics intimately connected with "the pleasures of the table," he arrived at cheese, speaking of the preliminary doctoring of a Stilton as of an art, which, if not exactly lost, had been in abeyance until resuscitated by experiments made in the interests of all who cared to eat "decently and in order" by himself.

I have often wondered since why this man, great in many ways, should have chosen to appear at that dinner-table that night as a *bon viveur* alone. Although other guests were expected later for a species of "reception," he and I were the only strangers present.

The Andersons were essentially admirers of intellect, and cared not a whit for their bodily aliment, so long as it was cleanly and sufficiently cooked. Why, then, this pose? Later in the evening—immediately after dinner, indeed, before the evening guests had arrived—he made me sit down to the piano and play him his favourite Chopin works, ending with the "Marche Funèbre." He listened to this, immovable, his head bent, his hands clasped around his knee. At the end he wiped tears from his eyes, and said, "You can make people remember, think, and feel. . . . It is a power. . . . You make me think of my dead mother. . . ."

Then he talked of deeper subjects in his melodious, sonorous voice. It was another Bellew. Heavens! There may have been a hundred different Bellews in one, just as there have been a hundred different Henry Irvings. Who can tell? Who can fathom the mysteries embodied in these men of extraordinary genius?

What Bellew was it who talked like a cook that day at the Andersons' dinner-table? What Bellew was it who afterwards, believing that the Old Faith was as true as it was old, forewent his sacred profession as a priest of the Anglican Church, eschewed all his magnificent chances of preferment, and, being married, meekly accepted the humble position of a mere ordinary layman in the Roman Church?

Many other personalities appear when I say "stand and deliver" to my memory regarding that summer season of 1861, during which, I may truly say, I suffered the most intimate, heart-searching disappointment of my whole life.

Days spent with the Helmes at Chestnut Walk, where "young Tom Hood," as the after-editor of *Fun* was familiarly called, organised charades to precede a dance, and I enacted the, to me, tempting rôle of a nun nursing a criminal and eliciting a confession of his crimes. Sundays spent at Lady Congreve's delightful suburban mansion in Maida Vale, which, as Lady Congreve was too greatly an invalid to take an active part as hostess, was made the pleasantest of hospitable houses to artists and other well-known persons by Miss Congreve, her daughter (direct descendant of the poet Congreve, and afterwards Lady Petheram, wife of the judge of that name). Miss Congreve was brilliantly clever, and was very good to me when she discovered my concealed, but by no means extinguished, longing to *write,* giving me valuable advice as to a course of reading calculated to fortify my style. I smiled inwardly when, above and beyond all things, she recommended the daily careful, indeed analytic, perusal of the very pabulum of my infancy— *The Times* leading articles!

Much that happened is veiled from me—at least, much that occurred after my great grief—a grief out of which, curiously enough, grew all my chances of eternal life—as far as we poor atoms can see and detect our chances of that one, great, only hope.

CHAPTER X

LUBECK had written to me—somewhat to my surprise—in French, for I wrote those confidential letters which he had asked for in English. They were the manly, kindly, protective letters of a middle-aged man to a child friend—little more—though there were many hints of his anxiety to hasten his visit to London, and allusions to the past months, which, I presume, he added for my heartening. His chief anxiety seemed to be to put a brake upon my work, if exhortation on his part could do it. He warned me seriously against "*cette soif de travail qui vous dévore.*" "*Soif de travail!*" It has devoured me to the end. . . . No heaven would be heaven to me without *work*, WORK, WORK. To have *work* will, I know, be my dying prayer.

He came in early June. On the Sunday following his arrival he dined with us, together with a young Dutch violinist, a friend of his, whose acquaintance we had made at one of the musical parties at some well-known amateur's, I forget which. He assumed the rôle of interested friend; only once did any opportunity occur for any lover-like behaviour on his part, then he kissed me, and said, "We shall meet at the Conversazione" (the Conversazione of the "Musical Society," given at

St. James's Hall) "and I must have a long talk with you."

I was on tenter-hooks until the evening mentioned. Lubeck had to play somewhere first, he was to arrive late. I was earlier in the regretted old hall, now demolished, which is a hallowed spot in the memory of music-lovers as the scene of the Philharmonic and Monday Popular Concerts, as well as of Ella's "Musical Union," of such musical feasts as those provided by the Bach Society, the Vocal Association, the Amateur Orchestral Society (dear to the late Grand Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, formerly the Duke of Edinburgh), the Musical Society, and many others now defunct, as well as of most interesting débuts of both British and foreign artists. In St. James's Hall, Hallé and Arabella Goddard showed English concert-goers what the perfection of mechanism upon the pianoforte really was—and Paderewski began the list of giant executants before whom all lesser lights in the past pale as stars in the sunlight.

St. James's Hall was the scene, to me, of public triumphs—but of the principal defeat of my own personal life.

The eventful night of my moral, mental, and physical blow stands out clear, distinct, as the worst hours of human torture do to their victims to the end.

The hall was wonderfully well arranged. Seats were either removed, or piled out of sight behind curtains. The floor was far less black in the early sixties than it became before its demolition, and square carpets were scattered here and there, while palms and flowers bordered the platform, and stands and tables

full of artistic objects, lent for the evening, were arranged about, as usual on such occasions.

Arrived with my mother, I found, to my dismay, hosts of friends and acquaintances, among them the Sargoods, the Gunnings (the late Mr. Wyatt Gunning, father of Frank Wyatt, the actor, had professed himself my staunch friend), and the Salamans, (Charles Salaman had been most encouraging), and so many vocalists and instrumentalists of my acquaintance that the list would weary—they are mostly dead and forgotten. Just before I was to play my contribution to the musical programme of the evening, Mr. Gunning suddenly swooped down upon me, and taking me by the arm, led me up to a lady in black, with a Roman nose, who wore a coral wreath on her hair—banded in a most unbecoming and already almost obsolete fashion—and saying, with an attempt at jocularity, "This is Lizzie Philp, a jolly old girl, and you are a jolly old girl—you ought to be great friends," left me, dumb and disgusted, staring at the lady.

Miss Philp's kindly talk was lost upon me. We were, afterwards, until the very day of her lamented death, great friends; but I never forgot the jar of that introduction, nor the horror of that wreath of artificial coral on that large, smooth-haired, dark head.

After more—under the circumstances of waiting for a crucial interview with the personage who meant nothing less than all life, all hope to me—distracting meetings and conversations, I went in despair to my kind, indulgent friend, Mr. Hipkins, and begged him to monopolise me for a while. I told him, frankly, why. I already told him as much of my pseudo-engage-

ment to Ernst Lubeck as, in honour to Lubeck, I dared tell.) He was, as usual, a refuge in distress, and escorted me about near to the door, until Lubeck entered, ponderous, beaming, reminding me more of my grandfather than ever, and after a few jocose, cheerful remarks, took possession of his fly like some huge, amiable spider.

I do not remember much beating about the bush on the part of the man who, doubtless, had not the faintest idea that he held a life in his hand. (I have not heard that there has yet been a Dutch Machiavelli.) Repeating that he had much to say to me, and that the balcony provided seats as well as seclusion, he took me up and found a corner opposite the platform, upon which a harpist, either, I think, the celebrated John Thomas or his rosy-cheeked brother, Aptommas, had begun to harp.

The metallic arpeggios of that beautiful, quaint instrument were the accompaniment to the execution of part of my being, which died then and there, never to be resuscitated; and I have never heard harp-music since without remembering that hour.

Lubeck came to the point at once. He told me that, when I left Paris, he had fully intended the very first time he and my father came face to face to ask him for me. But that since my departure it had been represented to him, and he had come fully and absolutely to recognise, that a marriage with me would mean disaster to us both.

"It is not common sense," he said. "In ten years you will be in your full bloom; but I, already old, shall be an old man; *and the rôle I should be called upon to play is one that I cannot accept.*"

Pride came to my aid. I said that of course he knew best. I had no doubt he was perfectly right. Then I listened, like an animated corpse from whom the soul has fled, to his consequent talk of friendship and the rest of it, including my future life and artistic career, which had about the same interest to me then as it would have had to a soulless, galvanised corpse. It was a deathly hour, for part of me died—the part of trusting, clinging, inferior (and gladly inferior) woman—and another part of me filled up the vacuum: something hard, stolid, passively resistant, but utterly irresponsive.

I have no recollection of what happened afterwards that night. I began to *act* with all my might, for I had only one feeling left—that Lubeck, who had dropped me into a sea of misery, should not realise the fact. As I learned in after-years, he never did.

CHAPTER XI

AMONG many really wonderfully kind friends that first season of mine were the Roneys. Sir Cusack Roney had lately removed to a huge house nearly opposite the church in Langham Place. His youngest daughter, Annette (now Mrs. Schofield, of Manchester), was a very clever and enthusiastic pupil of my mother's, and Lady Roney and her lovely elder daughters were her interested friends. Annette became my pupil, and, her mother having died, and the girls having the carriages to themselves, used to lend me a brougham whenever I required it to go about in.

So few possessors of carriages ever think of lending them to friends or protégés, that I mention this generous act of the Roney family with the certain grateful astonishment which has always accompanied my recollection of it. Sir Cusack Roney was an Irishman. As the principal ingredient in the Irish character (besides patriotism) is magnificent generosity, I have always felt that there is that in an Irishman which would not only force him to rescue his worst personal enemy from harm, even at the risk of his own destruction, but enjoy doing it—and attributed the Roney practical love of their fellow-creatures to their nationality.

My friend, Mary de Witte, was a great make-weight against a mental and nervous breakdown after the sudden rupture with Ernst Lubeck. (That rupture was doubtless the old story of the boys stoning the frogs, repeated—sport to the boys, but death to the frogs.) Very much through the de Wittes I "formed a connection" in teaching, as the saying is, which, as all in the profession know, is not an easy matter when the teacher is of the feminine gender. But my paltry earnings of about £3 weekly were absurd mockery in the eyes of my mother! "Eliza" had not descended to look into matters as they actually were. She would have delighted philosophers of the idealistic, deductive school, for she first settled her own premises, and deducted all else therefrom. When I appeared in public, she expected an immediate fortune.

She could barely conceal her gratification at the end of "the Lubeck absurdity," as she called it—a fact which consoled me enormously. "You were ill when you thought you liked him; it was a 'sick fancy,'" she would say. I tried with all my might to feel on the subject as she did, but failed signally, absolutely.

Then came a gleam of sunshine to brighten my inward gloom. I had only had glimpses of my beloved godmother, Susanna Marks, at intervals, since my happy time with her at Alveston. Just as I was free at the close of the season, she came to stay with some cousins, the Weedons, at Willesden, and Mrs. Weedon invited me for a few days to stay at her charming homestead in what was, then, the open country.

The expression "week-end" was then as unknown to the far more refined and fastidious Victorians as the

rest of that which is now modern, accepted *argot*. But the Saturday to Monday invitation to country houses was an established custom, though lacking any vulgar term to express it.

I did not confide my trouble to my godmother. I felt, with her transcendental ideas, she would hardly understand it. She was quite sufficiently exercised in mind on the subject of my being "a public performer." She thought my teaching career might have been led up to in a "nice, private, ladylike manner. But dear Lizzie's opinions were so *very* pronounced."

Her mourning over my publicity worried me in my desperate frame of mind. During three nights at Willesden I did not sleep one single minute. As soon as I became slightly drowsy, I seemed to see Lubeck, pale, determined, with a curious light in his green eyes, as when we said "good-bye"—I apparently unmoved, for I was as frozen stone. Then I was wide awake, and remained so until daylight, with the keen stab of the remembrance.

A sermon at the parish church on Sunday morning impressed me very much, and a graceful act on the part of the son of the house was quite a consolation in my inward misery, for next morning he presented me with a prettily bound notebook in which he had either written it from memory or copied another of the same pastor's. I enjoyed the young people's society in a subdued kind of way. It is pleasant to hear gay voices and laughter when one is utterly "down," it encourages dying hopes of possible better days in this "vale of tears." Senseless or ribald or defiant laughter is one thing, the innocent youthful delight in the pleasant-

ness of daily pure, honest life, another. All happiness be to those bright young creatures whose wholesome gaiety revives the drooping spirits of the disappointed and sorrowful.

A short visit to Aveley was not encouraging. Since his first apoplectic seizure a year or two previously, my grandfather had given over his practice to his nephew William, a man strikingly like my mother both physically and mentally. The cessation of work, the rapid alteration for the worse in business matters—for my grandfather's personality removed, the practice began literally to fall to pieces—then the deadly quarrel between my mother, who had not been consulted in the matter, and the cousin who had ignored her, all tended to reduce his broken health to a minimum of well-being. The change in him from the robust, gay, high-spirited doctor to a shrunken, pale, sad-looking old man was simply heart-breaking. Nothing pleased him but to sit in his chair, drooping, and listen to my newspaper articles. The maid who acted as nursing attendant to the aged couple—he was nearing his eightieth year, my grandmother was eighty-three—told me that sometimes she would be rung up in the night to read them to him. This, as I returned to London, was my only consolation. At least, after his tender cherishing, to which, humanly speaking, I owed my existence over and over again, he had some little pleasure through me in his days of "labour and sorrow."

Returned to London, the season over, all strain of immediate duty suspended, I fell sadly ill. There was nothing to treat exactly but absolute weakness. For

some of the hot, stifling weeks of a sultry London August I did little more than crawl from bed to sofa and sofa to bed. Physical exhaustion brought mental calm. I neither thought, nor felt, nor ruminated.

Then a Catholic friend and admirer of my mother's —Mrs. Rawson Reid—invited me to make a long stay at Bognor with her children and their governess, a very strong-minded and intellectual lady (the Miss Braine who was later one of the Claimant's defenders in the great Tichborne case). I accepted with relief and thankfulness, also with anticipation—for my only acquaintance with the sea was when crossing the Channel to and from England and the Continent. Until the second half of the Victorian era the yearly holiday at the seaside for all classes and grades was not an established fact, and I had never stayed at the coast, not even at the Essex watering-place on the Thames estuary, Southend.

So weak was I that the brief journey to Bognor exhausted me. But I shall never forget the sudden life blown into me by the brisk autumnal sea-breeze and strengthened by the sight of a leaping, pale-green sea. Mrs. Rawson Reid had rented the Manor House, a large old-fashioned seaside building, for her family. It was literally on the beach, and to be received there with open arms by the bright, pretty little girls, the eldest of whom, the auburn-haired, daisy-faced Ada, was not very much my junior, though still a child, was encouraging to drooping spirits.

It was an invigorating atmosphere. The innocent gaiety of the young in their first blush of unknowing confidence in life, within doors—and the sea, the wind,

the great clear expanse of changing and changeful sky above, without.

We were all great friends. Miss Braine, who had a somewhat commanding presence added to an unfailing geniality, was a mother-woman. So strong was the maternal, protective instinct in her, that she unconsciously "mothered" everything and everybody. (Heaven forgive me, I believe she might have "mothered" the Pope himself!) It was new to me to be looked after in this fashion. But I soon felt the benefit of it, physically and mentally. It was a time of royal jollity. Plenty of wholesome, appetising meals, brisk walks, rambles among the rocks seeking sea-creatures to add to the one boy's collection of beautiful sea-anemones, returns in triumph, drives to the rural villages round about, which reminded me of the Aveley of old days. Then on Sundays, long drives to remote chapels, where mere handfuls of Catholics attended Mass. These rustic services in domestic chapels appealed to me heart and soul. For years (in those days a few years seemed a lifetime) I had had no tangible religious life to cling to. My mother had had me confirmed in the Anglican Church, by special appeal to the Bishop of the Diocese, at thirteen. I received Communion. The utter nothingness which I felt during these functions frightened me into shunning all religious speculations, all deep searchings such as the lonely meditations of my childhood, altogether. I followed the forms, and left all else to the One Who made me. Once, accompanying a neighbour to High Mass at Lincoln's Inn Chapel, I was repelled by the elaborate function. But kneeling

among those devout rural worshippers, following the murmured Low Mass with meditative prayer, I was once more near to the Divine—the Soul of the World.

It was some little time before my mother-friend and I spoke on the subject. Good Catholics treat souls with reverence, as God's property, with which it is akin to sacrilege to intermeddle. When, even, Miss Braine discovered that the desire of my life—one which I had renounced as an impossibility, I am sure I don't know why, for a soul is certainly more a human creature's own than anything else can possibly be—was to be a Catholic, she was averse to saying a word. "My mother must be consulted, if I wished to go into the matter."

"Eliza" was written to, and, as usual, rose to the occasion. "If it would be any comfort to me to look into the Catholic faith, and, if satisfied, to embrace it, she, for one, had no objection. Anything which would promote my welfare would be welcome to *her*."

There was no mention of my father in the affair. But I note, looking back, that without an exception people seemed to regard my mother's word as including my father's. "Eliza" satisfied, every one, presumably, must be!

Then Miss Braine summoned the saintly young chaplain to the late Duke and surviving widowed Duchess at Arundel ("Mr. Butt" he was then called—before he rose, step by step, to be Bishop of Southwark) to my aid. A slim, gentle, shy, self-contained young priest, he came over every two or three days to enlighten me as to the doctrines of the Church, and was, I really believe, as frightened of me as I was of him. His

work, however, with me was easy. He found me well grounded (by my godmother?) in the Catholic belief, and not only ready, but eager, to be ruled by the Holy Father, his cardinals, bishops, and priests.

Hardly a fortnight passed before I made my general confession, and was received into the old faith. I made my first Communion kneeling among some soldiers in the then tiny inn on Littlehampton shore, the Beach Inn. Mr. Butt had met and driven us over—he had still a Mass to say at Arundel, later.

I was at rest, in peace, and animated by a new, strong, mental and spiritual life—a settled recognition of the vast scheme which had often puzzled me—which furthered physical, as well as mental, health.

CHAPTER XII

IT was well I had a staff to support me that winter of 1861–2, for I had much to go through.

Late in the year the whole English people were startled by the sudden announcement of the death of the Prince Consort.

He had been ill—I believe, indeed, that it had been deemed necessary to issue bulletins. If so, those bulletins had been so carefully worded that no one suspected danger—no one, at least, who belonged to the general public—and those black placards, "DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT," seemed to paralyse London.

I shall never forget seeing that horrible sentence. I bought a paper and carried home the dire news.

Mourning was general. London was hushed. People felt all the more because of their British grudge to the *foreigner* who shared the throne with their popular Queen. Every unit of the classes and masses had been a critic of the Queen's chosen spouse and cousin; and now that he, with the transcendental German ideas which they had resented, albeit he had created a mental and moral atmosphere which had been a great make-weight against the John Bull tendency to utter materialism, was dead—suddenly, unexpectedly, in the first fullness of his fine life—they were not only shocked, but in various degrees conscience-stricken and remorseful.

The women to a woman mourned with their Queen. They literally shed rivers of tears over the brief, curt, but pregnant announcements of her grief; over the rumours of her refusals to allow the Prince's *personalia* —even to his dressing-gown and slippers — to be touched; of the purely human idea of her sending for the little Princess Beatrice, her baby, to share her bed. The natural consequence of this public calamity was a dull, if not abortive, season. The "Great Exhibition of 1862" prevented, doubtless, the worst disasters to trade. Our foreign visitors arrived without stint, as they would have arrived had the Queen of England's husband lived, instead of incontinently dying like any ordinary individual not crucially interested in the promotion of international exhibits and the general maintenance of peace. Opera, concerts, entertainments started as usual, but for some months performers eschewed gay colours.

I began the season early, playing at a "monster concert" given by the composer-critic, Howard Glover. In the early spring I was arranging a concert on more imposing lines than my first. I had chartered St. James's Hall, had pre-engaged the violinist Wieniawski, and one or two distinguished vocalists. My posters and programmes were issued—when the blow fell.

My kindest and best earthly friend, my grandfather, died. I had been with him a week or two before—there was a railway then which passed Purfleet, the garrison hamlet, a mile from Aveley. I was waiting for my mother's return one dark, early March afternoon when a telegram was handed in.

"*Come immediately to Aveley.*" It was from the

cousin William with whom my mother had quarrelled. The telegraph-boy had hardly left the door—in fact it was still open—when my mother entered.

I broke the message to her, and tried to suggest that the erratic, half-crazy relative who had sent it (he died later in Bethlehem madhouse) might be deemed an exaggerator. Indeed, it was hardly sane to send such an ambiguous summons in late afternoon without the slightest indication of the trend of the occurrence, or occurrences, which had necessitated it.

Of course, she resolved to start at once. While she hastily prepared, I looked out her train and sent off a message that she must be met—it would be late. She started out into the darkness of a wild March night, and I was left alone, but for my little sister, to break the news to my father on his return from a long day's teaching.

How much worse is suspense than a blow itself! Suspense seems to string up the nervous system to its extremest limits, while a certainty, however grievous, deadens it.

Which of my two more than parents—the dear beings to whom I owed every fraction of happiness, brightness, peace—was dying or dead?

Such nights as that one which followed the peculiar telegram I would pray Heaven to spare my very worst enemy, if I have had one, which, judging from the generous kindness of my fellow-creatures from my start to near my finish, I have the best reason to doubt. With morning came the relief of certainty, but the inevitable blow.

My grandfather had fallen back suddenly, dead, in

his chair. "Order mourning; then come," ended my mother's telegram.

Sometimes when the weird feeling, "I too must die," occurs, I remember that death only really exists for the living. The dead one is gone. The corpse, coffin, grave—the mourning, inward and outward—belong utterly to the survivors. Indeed, it seems as if it had been created for them as a distraction from the one dreadful thought, *we shall never see him, or her, again.* That mourning—its responsibility—was a grand spur in my inward passion of grief. Outwardly a stone, a human being can inwardly be writhing in deadly anguish, as only too many well know.

It was late at night I made the journey, and saw my grandfather lying in his shell on trestles in that drawing-room where I had first resigned myself, helped by the music-poet Chopin, to a future of professional music.

So magnificent was his beauty, so grand a form was that extended in the long coffin, that awe—reverence for the Creator's handiwork—hushed the wilder grief-clamours of my nature. But the rest of it all was like some ghastly dream, especially the luncheon after the funeral, with his lively nephew, William, at the head of a table laden with dainties which my grandfather had of late denied himself in his fear of his expenditure overlapping his reduced income—a table served profusely with the remnants of choice wines he had been loth to drink, knowing he could never again replenish the choice cellar of which he had been so proud. . . . I remember that when the convivial talk "waxed fast and furious," as if this, indeed, were a festive occasion,

rejoicing in the departure of the dead rather than regretting it, I fled upstairs to where my mother—the only being who could possibly console the perfect wife, now a widow—was sharing her sorrow. . . .

My grandmother elected to dare a journey to London, which she had not seen for upwards of thirty years, to take up her residence with us.

She came, travelling the twenty odd miles in an easy carriage. Chosen furniture had preceded her. She was to live in the rooms above the drawing-rooms in the old Queen Square house. Installed there, she took a keen interest in everything, as well as in the special details of the sale of my grandfather's effects. Just before her arrival, news came of a second death, which had occurred on February 16th, a fortnight before my grandfather's, in the Mauritius.

A month or two previously we had had bad news from the island. Cholera had broken out; the medical men — including, of course, my brother-in-law, Dr. Bazire, who had married my sister Etta in 1858—were overworked, and if fighting despair, doubtful whether the outbreak would not prove well-nigh unconquerable. But the victims up to date were almost entirely of the lower classes—the Africans, Malays, and Indian and Chinese coolies, the filth of whose daily lives might account for the worst ravages of the disease. Even when we had received a tear-blotted letter from my poor sister, heartbroken at the death of the nurse—a good countrywoman and soldier's widow tempted to cast in her lot and leave her native land with the Bazires by solid monetary considerations, we hardly realised what news might follow.

When the mail after my grandfather's death brought a shoal of black-edged letters, we certainly realised that cholera spares none, that white flesh and blood is as easy a prey to the plague as the blackest of the black.

My sister was dead. Her grief for her nurse's death prostrated her; the scourge found her an easy victim.

Again I had to break dread news to my mother, who arrived from Aveley to make the final arrangements for my grandmother's future comfort an hour or two after I and my father had learnt the worst.

Once more she rose to the occasion. I respected her. She waived her own natural grief at the loss of her eldest surviving child. She thought only of the living, her duties to them—to her aged mother, to the broken-hearted widower who had already resigned his appointments in the Mauritius, ordered a sale of the Parisian furniture which had preceded him there, and was bringing his children—the elder a wreck after cholera—to England as soon as possible.

Care for my grandmother was a make-weight against our scared sensations. After my lifetime—eighteen years—of immunity from death, it seemed to me as if the whole family were tumbling about my ears. This feeling was intensified when, after a calm, happy six weeks of life with us, my grandmother died, as suddenly as the spouse of long years who had preceded her.

My mother rushed into my room, rousing me from sleep early one morning, crying, "Come down; your grandmother is dying!" Obeying her summons, I witnessed the last, sobbing breaths of the departing for the first time.

It was this third shock which prevented me from carrying out the wish of both my mother and grandmother, that private grief should not be allowed to interfere with my public arrangements.

For once, I felt unequal to the ordeal of facing the public. Always a cruel trial, I knew I was too shattered by the three great shocks dealt within eight weeks to further my future interests in any way. I took matters into my own hands. I had engaged Mr. Jarrett, the well-known agent (curiously enough, the stepfather of the future husband, Louis Diehl, whom I had not yet seen), to act for me. I had engaged St. James's Hall for an evening concert.

All praise to the good men who stood by me! Mr. Jarrett at once promised to arrange all with the artists engaged, as well as with printers and subordinate assistants, but provisoed that I should settle matters myself at St. James's Hall. This I did—through the sweet sympathy of the lanky, odd, dark, American-looking Mr. Austin. He was like some kindly brother. I saw the engagement book, letters asking for dates. "I'll get somebody to take on your night; you just go home and leave it to me, and don't worry yourself," was his generous speech.

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A cheering element after the depression occasioned by the death of the universally mourned Prince Consort was "the Great Exhibition of 1862."

Somewhat disappointing to those who remembered the fairy palace of 1851, it still was of a majestic, imposing, and elevating character. The countries seemed

to vie with each other to send of their best and noblest works, the outcome of human talent and even genius. The arts were well represented. The English and their visiting cosmopolitan thousands were made acquainted not only with new trade advancements, fresh inventions, but with new works of hitherto undreamt of sculptors, painters, and the rest of those who are born to make dull life beautiful.

Personally, I was most interested in the pianofortes. Hitherto, Broadwood and Erard reigned supreme in a pianist's existence. To find in Steinway a producer of instruments which transcended one's highest ideal of what a pianoforte might be was a startling revelation. At least, it was so to me. On a given day, accompanied by some other piano players (among them, I remember, were the erst prodigy "Arthur Napoleon," the Dutchman Martin Lazare, the German Sigismund Blumner, and others), we had a kind of general recital in the court devoted to musical instruments, and when we left the building our prevailing feeling was "Steinway for ever!"

There have been remarkable developments in piano-building since, but Steinway was undoubtedly the head and front of the bold departure from old and familiar methods.

In 1851 the great competition was between the firms of Erard and Broadwood alone.

Madame Erard herself told me how the winning of the "great gold medal" for her firm was due to a certain well-known London musical enthusiast, Dr. Black, whose vote on the jury happened to be the casting one in her favour, and how he brought her

the news. On the evening of the crucial day she was at the opera, so anxious and strung-up with suspense that she could hardly hear what was going on on the stage. So unnerved, indeed, was she that when a tap came at the box door, and it was opened to admit Dr. Black, she jumped out of her chair with excitement; and when he came forward, grasped her hands, and said, "The medal is yours!" she thought it a wild dream from which she would presently awaken.

True widow of a loved husband, while full of tenderness and charity towards the whole world, the great object of her bereaved life was to watch over, protect, and further every interest—all, indeed—that had been dear to her lost spouse.

At her house—in London she occupied apartments over the offices at 18 Great Marlborough Street—my father and I met the great pianist, Thalberg. He was then, or appeared to be, over fifty; but while fine lines were graven by Time on his fair, handsome features, and his hair was scant on the temples, his playing had not lost—could not have lost—any charm or perfection during the slipping away of remorseless years. He played us many of his compositions, including the fantasia on airs from *Don Giovanni*, which was one of the pieces on the list Henselt had given me to study, and which, practised with an immovable wrist-joint, had fairly "floored" me; also some of his tuneful and graceful studies. He had long, delicate fingers. He sat easily at the piano; he played easily—the music, indeed, seemed to flow out of the tips of those fingers upon the keys—a peculiar effect which I have only otherwise seen in the case of Arabella Goddard, who

for some time was his pupil, and of the distinguished amateur, Mrs. Charlton.

His tone was liquid, soft, sweet. There was no violence in his playing; he simply moved his hands, and the difficult flights of intricate passages showered upon the ear, came as easily from those hands as the spray from a fountain. When there was a theme to be "sung"—expressed as far as themes can be by a keyed instrument—it was more a tender suggestiveness which wrought the effect of poetic pathos than a passionate appeal. Never, under any circumstances whatever, could Thalberg, man or musician, have suggested that seeming product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—"a soul in pain."

Dr. Black was tall, fine, with an eager, authoritative manner, bright, intent eyes, convincing speech, and evidently untiring energy. At his house in Brompton I was the pianist of the evening in a musical soirée given in honour of Madame Erard on the eve of her return to Paris. I had been much with her, had driven with her while in Paris to see her château at Passy—La Muette—had, in spite of the snow, investigated the beautiful grounds, with their pruned avenues and statues in the accepted French garden fashion. But our parting—as it proved for ever here in this world—took place that strange night at Dr. Black's. It was a successful evening. The music pleased the guests. All were on the eve of descending to supper, when there was a sudden stir. There had been a cry outside on the staircase; it came again—"FIRE!"

As if by instinct, Madame Erard and I clung together, and making our way below, were seated in her

carriage waiting under the trees some houses away before I had realised what had happened. Dr. Black's urgent request to all to leave the house for the immediate present had been obeyed. But those with carriages waited to see the end of the play. Most of the men returned, and rendered such signal assistance that when the fire-engines came blatantly, noisily upon the scene the enemy was practically conquered.

It had been an insignificant enemy after all. A window left open on a hot summer night, a sudden breeze blowing lace curtains into the candles on the dressing-table, then a blaze. But Madame Erard would not return to the house. It has been pleasant to me to remember how she held my hand while Monsieur Schaeffer went to and fro, reporting the progress of the fire-extinguishers, and insisted upon driving me home—although my people came to claim me—still in affectionate nearness, as if her pure soul instinctively knew that the hand of her protégée would never again rest in hers. . . .

The year 1862 can hardly ever be recalled by me without pain. During its progress I lost both the more than devoted grandparents to whom over and over again I practically owed my life, and my musical career in consequence halted—a dangerous and in many ways fatal handicap to the professional life of any young artist.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER a year entirely barren of professional progress as far as I was concerned, I determined that it should not be my fault if 1863 were not twelve months of close struggle to reassert myself as a pianist and would-be professor.

The age of nineteen seemed to me then, in my fresh spirit of ambition, beyond the meridian of life. Anxious to be in the field before my nineteenth birthday, I organised an evening concert in the Hanover Square Rooms. The Duchess of Cambridge and Princess Mary gave their patronage as before, and the tickets sold well. I wished to play a duet for two pianos with Ernst Pauer, the well-known pianist, who had played almost for the first time in London at my father's musical evenings in Hunter Street. I was then a mere infant, but there had seemed to me to be a rush of youth and passion in his playing which was akin to a mountain torrent of music, carrying away one's sympathies like a twig cast into the seething and boiling water. So strong was the feeling, that when I first stood in wondering delight by a mountain burn in the grounds of Forest Lodge, Blackmount, nearly thirty years later, I seemed to see again the tall, dark

stripling fresh from Germany seated at the Erard grand in the Hunter Street drawing-room.

I engaged Alexander Reichardt, whose singing had delighted me as a child, as tenor singer. There were two lady vocalists—one being Miss Emily Soldene; the other, I think, was a tall, golden-haired Mlle. Georgi. Herr Pauer was detained in Scotland, unexpectedly (contretemps are inevitable to concert-givers). It seemed as if there would be a disappointment. But the ever-ready Messrs. Broadwood lent private rooms in Great Pulteney Street in which he could dress and dine and afterwards rehearse with me immediately upon his arrival in London—before proceeding to the concert. I have a vivid recollection of the evening; the anxiety, the driving to Great Pulteney Street, and finding Mr. Hipkins master of the ceremonies. Pauer was dining; Mr. Hipkins entertained us while we waited by a bright fire in an old-fashioned sitting-room. The proceeding was unusual, and, judging by myself, out-of-the-way arrangements have a glamour for the young. But the *crux* of the evening had still to be. Arriving at the concert-rooms, we found my father in one of his "white rages." In these, he would stalk about like an infuriated ghost, glaring, speechless. Reichardt was in a passion, and anathematising every one concerned—pacing the artists' room (a large room, used for suppers when the great saloon was a ballroom on occasion)—his fury alarming the meeker, but disgusted, lady singers.

He had been placed second on the programme—after my trio with Deichmann and Piatti—a position which, he chose to consider, ought to have been allotted to one

of the ladies who could not claim so world-wide a reputation. Hence this anger!

I had no power to stem his indignation. Nor, evidently, had my father. To glare, palely—as my father did upon offenders—might have effect when the pale glarer is Somebody. But when the pale glarer is a man who began at the top of the ladder and has descended, however decently and in order, to the foot where he becomes a Nobody, staring pallor denoting inward wrath is a negligible quantity.

"What shall I do?" I despairingly asked Mr. Hipkins—ever the calm, ready friend.

"Give me his cheque, and leave him to me," he said, in his soothing, dulcet way.

Oh, those quiet, self-contained men—calm in bearing, honeyed in speech—what powers in everyday life they are! For the "velvet glove" of their outward man is but the bait to the unwary. The very sweetness, dashed judiciously with the bitter-as-gall flavour, disarms the adversary, while the latent acid warns him of danger.

Backed by the power of the great house of Broadwood, Mr. Hipkins managed and arranged difficult situations, arbitrated, and reconciled. Under his apparently persuasive treatment, the Reichardt lion became a lamb. The concert proceeded quietly to its appointed end.

There were other concerts at which I played. And once again I found myself in *salons* where artists were always welcome. But the event of 1863—in my case an event which, by a concatenation of incidents, led to the shunting of my life into other channels—was my intro-

duction by our friend of life, Lady Raglan (formerly Lady Georgiana Lygon), to the patron of music and musicians, the Earl of Dudley.

The beautiful creature was always, in her unselfish life, thinking of others. She never left us long without finding out how we fared, and doing her utmost to help and further our interests. I do not remember which year it was that she married the son of the celebrated Lord Raglan, but I well recollect the array of wedding-presents—we were "spending the day" in Grosvenor Place, as so often before—and the gratification it was to see our modest offerings among the diamonds and the gold, also, a few days later, the marriage in a Belgravian church of extremest High Church tendencies. I can see her now, coming down the church on her bridegroom's arm, in a heavy lace veil thrown back over as heavy a wreath of real orange-blossom. The various shades of white—of the heavily scented blossoms, the old lace, the thick silk of her rich, plain gown—chimed in ill with the unusual pallor of her ordinarily peach-like complexion. Her dark-blue eyes looked very blue, her dark hair very dark, and there was a sadness in her rare, sweet smile as she noticed her special friends as she left the church on her husband's arm, which, to me, boded ill. I felt singularly depressed for some time after—one of those horrible whispers which meant death had unnerved me as that lovely, pale bride went by. . . . She died, all too young, in the first fullness of rich, beautiful youth, as her mother, Lady Susan Lygon, and her sister, Lady Felicia Cavendish, had died before her.

But, before her premature translation, she had a time of healthy, happy wife and motherhood. In the early

days of her married life she suggested to my mother that a special introduction from herself to Lord Dudley might help me on. Her large-hearted sympathy was ours during our troubles in 1862—she felt the death of her childhood's playmate, my sister Etta, greatly, as a touching letter from her to my late mother, which I found among her most cherished documents, signified. Her wish to help me on again after my year's halt led to her securing an invitation from Lord Dudley to a luncheon at Dudley House, to which he would invite a few friends who were most inclined to appreciate my special "modern romantic school."

The day came. I arrived in mid-morning at 19 Grosvenor Place (Lord Beauchamp's house, Lord Raglan's town house in Rutland Gate was not yet ready). To Lady Raglan's amusement, we were dressed curiously alike—dark silk dress, white bonnet with the broad, white silk strings then *de rigueur*, and "Indian" shawl. Mine was an Indian Paisley, a gift to my mother, and hers was one of the priceless shawls which formed part of Queen Victoria's marriage gifts to favourite young friends; but the difference was as it should be. Arrived at Dudley House, we were at once escorted to the "music-room," an upstairs room afterwards used as a schoolroom by the present Lord Dudley and his brothers and sister, now Lady Wolverton. Mrs. Claughton, Lord Dudley's sister, wife of the then Bishop of Rochester, received us. Miss Claughton (first married to Colonel Anson, and secondly to the Duke of Argyll, a bright, charming, winsome young creature, curiously like certain early portraits of Queen Victoria) resided principally with her uncle, to play

hostess at Dudley House; but when the exigencies of the London season pressed hardest, her mother came to her rescue as often and for as long a time as her duties as bishopess would permit. We found both Mrs. and Miss Claughton, who said that his lordship would be with us directly. But others arrived before that magnate put in an appearance: Mrs. Dudley Ward and a sweet, tall young daughter; Vera, the Italian singing-master, who was in constant attendance upon "Louis Quatorze," as he termed his patron, arrived, bringing a stout, fair, middle-aged sister, a soprano, known as Madame Vera-Lorini, for whom he craved his patron's suffrages; Mr. Hohler, the possessor of so luscious and rare a tenor voice that Lord Dudley had elected him as a species of honorary private secretary, that he might have it on the premises, as it were; Mr. Fuller, also a gifted amateur, a sculptor, who lived mostly in Rome, and others, assembled by degrees. The room had the appearance of one of the anterooms of a monarch of which one reads in histories of certain periods, when the magnate whose *fiat* then had almost sufficient potency to make or mar the career of vocalist or solo-instrumentalist entered, and I felt a shock.

Tall, imposing, with a black, wig-like *chevelure* flowing to the collar of his dark-blue frock-coat, the smart appearance, that of a dandy or "buck" of the George the Fourth period, lent him, with his height and largely built frame, a certain suggestion of incongruity. But what I felt as an unpleasant thrill to the nerves at the first sight of him (kind friend as he was to me from beginning to end, I never quite got over it) was his extraordinary likeness to the picture in a book I had

seen as a tiny child of a man in black wig and cloak watching King Charles the First on his brief journey to his martyrdom. There was a stolid indifference on the face of that black-wigged spectator of the murder of his king which had excited my childish hatred. I was fascinated by the fatal picture. I had stuck pins into that pictured man, and repeated curses upon him under my breath, feeling both relieved and conscience-burdened afterwards; and here he was, living, breathing, in the flesh!

These impressions I scouted on principle. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" was my attitude in their regard. I "crowded on steam," and by the time his strange-looking lordship shook hands with this latest would-be protégée among the myriads kind friends were everlastingly providing him with (if he had not been embodied good nature he would have, even in those days, become a perfect Timon of Athens) I had got myself in my own grip.

First came luncheon in a big dining-room hung mostly with Rubens' pictures of goddesses whose fatness overflowed their scant drapery in a conspicuous manner, which made a girl unaccustomed to such splendid nakedness somewhat ashamed. Lady Raglan was on Lord Dudley's right, I on his left. He divided his attention between us with the Whig-like impartiality which was his boast—and no empty one—for so gentle a treatment, so tolerant an endurance of blatant, impudent vulgarity in the coarser and more uneducated of the masses than I have seen shown by him can hardly before have existed.

How well I remember that luncheon! The buzz of

voices, the sun brightening Lady Raglan's exquisite beauty, the wig-like head of the dilettante Earl swaying as he spoke a stream of clever, anecdotal talk. I spilt a drop of the clear soup on my white bonnet-strings, which dashed my ability to swallow the roast mutton and peas, and after nice dishes. (No one appeared to notice that round, horrid stain, but I felt they saw it.) The intense relief of an adjournment from the table where I had committed a horrid, social *faux pas*, as I deemed it, together with a certain desperation born of mingled shyness and disgust for a life which produced such pungent trials at this, made me do my best on the big Broadwood grand in the music-room. I was applauded and encouraged—I had a success. His lordship talked with me in a fatherly, chatty, reassuring way. He wished me to come again as soon as possible; then, finding that I liked the opera, presented me with an ivory counter stamped either 81 or 84 in black figures, which made me the possessor, for the season of 1863, of one of his "property boxes" at Her Majesty's Theatre, of which Mapleson was then lessee and *impresario*. Lady Raglan afterwards drove me in the park, but I was in such a semi-delirium of delight at the possession of that magic ivory counter that all her sweet kindness was not fully that day as much ecstasy as it was wont to be. The passionate craving to show "Eliza" the first prodigy which had at last happened was overpowering. I returned home in a hansom, mentally and physically swimming in a new joy. But my mother received the agreeable as she encountered the reverse. She was never surprised, astonished, or taken aback.

"I told you, if you only had patience, everything would come right," she judicially said.

So the extraordinary windfall of unlimited opera was only "everything coming right"! My mother had suggested that my kind friend, Mr. Hipkins, should be offered a seat in "our box" that night. A telegram was sent; he accepted. I remember pondering deeply on this sudden occurrence in my lately humdrum, workaday life in the box, where my mother and I were alone—my father was returning late—a note had been left for him. The opera was the *Trovatore*, and whenever I hear excerpts from it (now that in its entirety it is so rarely given) I remember my perplexed wondering at this sudden elevation of my humble self into the possessor of "a box at the opera."

Mr. Hipkins arrived, suave, kindly, as usual. But I felt his humour was an unwonted one—and when he confessed to having given a cabman half a sovereign instead of sixpence, I understood; for I not only knew the value of that smallest of British gold coins, but of its humbler prototype, the useful little sixpence.

Much of my time was chartered, after that, for Dudley House. There were daily hours of music in the celebrated picture-gallery; and the happy possessor of, I believe at that time, one thousand pounds *per diem* looked upon time from a totally different standpoint to that of those who could not boast of a thousand farthings. Luckily for me, my tangible work—lesson-giving—was a morning occupation, or those dawdling hours, pleasant enough to the rich, but irksome to daily-bread-workers, would have been more than I elected to think it well to endure.

Lord Dudley was kindness itself. He placed carriages —riding-horses, if I chose—at my disposal, and constantly sent some pretty, girlish trinket by post, with a sweet little note. I cared not at all for the trinkets. It was hard work to tender thanks. The single brougham placed at my disposal I was very glad of. I thought of it as I had thought of Sir Cusack Roney and his kind daughters' loan. But others, evidently, had other ideas.

Georgina, Countess of Dudley—when I was staying, years after, with them at Forest Lodge, Blackmount—told the Italian accompanist Vera, who was also staying there—after saying pretty things about me, that it was almost a pity I was "*un peu dans les astres.*"

If "*un peu dans les astres*" means blind as a bat to ordinary matters any other fool except oneself can see, then I was "*un peu dans les astres*" all my life, and—Heaven knows!—may be altogether "*dans les astres*" while I am penning these very words.

In any case—when one day I came home and found my mother half frantic with anger at either a letter or visit from Mr. Henry Broadwood (I never knew which) protesting against my being so often, without herself as chaperon, at the house of a bachelor nobleman, and being allowed to accept an opera-box, and drive in his carriages, I considered that the head of the distinguished old firm had incontinently bid farewell to his senses.

I felt outraged, I hardly knew why. My sensations were inexpressible when, bearding Mr. Hipkins in his den early next morning, and demanding an explanation of so summary a proceeding "behind my back"—as the common, but expressive saying is—he gravely and

coolly stated that Mr. Broadwood had acted according to his advice; that if my mother was misguided enough to allow me to defy worldly conventionalities and "get myself talked about," it behoved those who were interested in my career to do what they could in my defence.

I felt cruelly, deeply wounded; very, very angry. Still, some lurking doubt lest "Eliza's" wild expectations of miracles of success to all belonging to her should have led her wrong, sent me home unconvinced.

With my mother I waived the subject. But I secretly went to my kind friend, Mrs. Sargood, to place the matter before her and ask her advice. Generous-hearted, liberal-minded, she was, I well knew, possessed of an intimate knowledge of the various social worlds and their conventionalities.

To my consternation, she seemed embarrassed, then intensely surprised at my doubting that it was not the "proper thing" for me to visit at Dudley House without my mother, or to use a bachelor nobleman's carriages, acknowledging that I had been "talked about," and that neither she nor her husband could possibly understand how so superior a personage as my mother could have failed so conspicuously in her duties.

I opened my mouth to explain "Eliza," and shut it again. It would have taken hours to explain "Eliza," and at the end she would have remained unexplained. But I went home very, very sorrowful, and sorrowfully told my mother.

Anger was a poor term to express her reception of my confession. That which irked her most was my "want

of confidence in her judgment." I do not think she and Mrs. Sargood met again.

Matters drifted. It was nearing the close of the season. With many griefs and fears in my heart, I went on as usual, but some premonition of coming trouble weighed me down. Still, I was unprepared for my mother, who seemed subdued and very silent—had been very silent since Mrs. Sargood had been sought by me—suddenly assuming a tyrannical attitude.

During the season I had met Louis Diehl, the step-son of Henry Jarrett, in whose house lived the great Jupiter critic, J. W. Davison. More than usually interested in him as a resident under the roof which sheltered Davison, I liked him greatly for himself. It was not for his good looks—I had once adored an ugly man, and every man who at all resembles Lubeck compels my admiration even now—he was dark, slim, with big dark eyes; and when she was dying, many, many years later, my mother, waking from one of those restless doses peculiar to the last hours of our lives, suddenly said to me, "Your husband is the most selfish being who ever lived, but he was the handsomest man I ever saw." No! I did not think him handsome. My whole being claimed him as if he were some long-lost, intimate friend suddenly returned. Each time I met him my whole self seemed to cry "Hurrah!" I liked everything he said, everything he did. A simple, wholesome, unworldly youth—he was certainly six-and-twenty, but looked eighteen—our meetings were like my childhood come back. A non-smoker and actual disliker of strong drink, our great enjoyment was a feast of coffee and three-cornered rasp-

berry puffs. Early in our friendship, after he had told me his was "love at first sight"—that he had watched me two years before as I stood in the tiny artists' room at St. James's Hall, he standing on that narrow staircase which wound up to it, and had said to himself, "That girl is my fate" (doubtless an unconscious exaggeration—he was not given to lying)—we became engaged between ourselves. We were not to marry until we had saved money and had improved our position. (He was already a violin leader at Her Majesty's and the Philharmonic and other concerts, and had published successful songs, but was naturally only at the very beginning of his career.)

He told me, meanwhile, the story of his life, which had been a chequered one. His mother had been a German actress of the greatest beauty. (Seeing her shortly before her death, in her eighty-third or fourth year, I can testify to the brilliancy of her undimmed intellectual powers, as well as to a splendid presence—that which had earned her the *sobriquet* of "the Duchess.") His father had been, as documents in my possession prove, one of the natural sons of Napoleon the First.

This was interesting. But Louis Diehl's principal attraction in my eyes was the entire lack in him of the silly flattery of which I was so deadly sick. Why men should fancy that their bounden duty to girls, especially those who appeal to the public in any way, is to heave heavy masses of fulsome compliments upon them I cannot imagine. Men may not do it now, I fancy it is rather the women who flatter the men, in this twentieth century; but formerly many a man earned the dislike

of wholesome-minded girls—such as many I knew in those simpler, golden days—by this obnoxious habit.

Louis Diehl never paid me a compliment. Indeed, he struck the keynote of his future position in my regard at once.

"I had no idea you had such a yellow skin," was one of his remarks. (He had seen me by gaslight at the opera, where he had constantly gazed up at my box, and my mother had called him "Moon Face.") Then he scorned my being minus a button to my glove; and when he met me at Broadwood's to hear me play, he went so far as to "wonder why people had thought so much of my playing. He could not hear anything particular in it."

"This is the man for me; he will keep me in order, and I shall have a little rest," I thought. The fact was, the battle to keep my violent, resentful, raging self chained, and to behave calmly and judicially, was wearing me out. To be actively checked and snubbed by some one else would partly shunt my trying task.

One day he came to meet me—we met in Russell Square for a walk in Regent's Park or on Primrose Hill—full of a ring he had seen.

"It is of solid, beaten gold, with a diamond and an emerald," he said; and our walk was, that day, to Regent Street, where he came to a sudden halt, and said proudly, "There!"

I looked at the tray of rings he pointed out—insignificant little circlets—and said, "Where?"

When I discovered the ring of "beaten gold" I liked it very well, and was glad when it was safely on my finger, for I wanted to tell my mother that Louis Diehl

and I intended, finally, to sail life's sea together, and it was a good opportunity to make the plunge.

She received my news with derision. In days gone by, she had sent me hither and thither as she pleased, by sarcasm, scathing contempt. Now she added reproach. "I am ashamed of you, allowing a poor young fellow to spend his hard earnings on you like that!" she exclaimed. She would not treat the situation with anything approaching to seriousness. She forbade me ever to bring him near her. She could not recognise the acquaintance.

Then I was seriously ill with quinsy. The day came when death threatened; preparations were made for tracheotomy; and when the double quinsy broke "in the nick of time" she was reduced to an abject state of acquiescence in everything which might further my peace and comfort.

When I was downstairs again in the sitting-room which had been my grandmother's, and which I loved, together with its old Aveley furniture, she actually allowed Louis Diehl to come and see me.

I confess that my betrothed did not shine that day. He had little tact. He showed no concern in my illness and recovery, and talked to my mother of the trivial concerns of public interest. I was hardly surprised when, after he took leave, she solemnly adjured me, once and for all, to "put that young man out of my life."

"I will tell you what he is," she said: "he is the only man who has no regard for you whatever, and he is a mere boor; he allowed you to put on coals without moving a finger!"

She little knew that this, in my eyes, was a guarantee that my Nathanael, as I mentally called him, had no ideas of capturing me for his own benefit in any way. I knew him to be as guileless as a man could be; but guileless men are mostly what those women who like humbug term "boors." Nothing further occurred. I was rather relieved that she became silent on the subject. But after a few weeks spent at Brighton to recover a little strength, I returned to London to face a storm.

Lord Dudley wrote me a long, chatty letter from Scotland, detailing his sport in deer-stalking, shooting, and salmon-fishing, and telling me that the wedding of his niece, Miss Claughton, whom I knew so well, would take place about Christmas-time at Witley, and that they would all like me to be there to play for them now and then. "Pinsuti is coming for the singers," he added. "He will escort you on your journey."

My mother was amazed that I hesitated about an immediate reply. Indeed, she was irked into an unfortunate remark from her point of view.

"That wretched young man is going to ruin your life!" she cried passionately. "Of course you would have jumped at such a thing, but for some nonsense about him! You have the ball at your feet, the cards in your hands; you have only to play them."

She flounced off, as she invariably did, after delivering a crucial speech which she intended to take effect. This one was indeed crucial, after the opinion of Mr. Broadwood, Mr. Hipkins, and Mrs. Sargood, and their, to me, terrible hints that I had ignorantly outraged ordinary conventionality.

Usually, when I felt, to the quick, that "Eliza" and I might be mother and daughter in the flesh, but that our souls were as distant from each other as the poles, I froze; more, I ossified.

But, on that occasion, an awful feeling took possession of me. I suddenly felt as if I were changed into a smouldering mass of hatred and disgust for everything and everybody. A wild instinct to rush away anywhere, lose myself, become a savage creature of the woods, and howl like a maniac at any human wretch who dared come near me, seized me violently. I had some time of literal agony of mind, and then suddenly came "Hush!"

It was as if all these frantic emotions rushed away, helter-skelter, pell-mell, panic-stricken, before the power of God.

It is worth all anguish, all misery, yes, even all hopelessness, abandonment, threatened despair, to be succoured by the memory, the thought, the presence of God. May this comfort come swift and soon to the perplexed, the afflicted, and above all, to those outraged by the folly of their fellow-creatures, is my constant prayer for my brothers and sisters in this often dreadful and terrifying world.

When the soul feels God, then indeed "all's right with the world!" In a flash I knew what to do; that here was placed in my hands the most valuable test of my future husband. If he approved of my accepting the invitation, after what I had told him of the Broadwood-Hipkins-Sargood experiences, I should see him no more. If, on the contrary, he felt as I felt, or in a similar way, then—then—he was practically endors-

ing my already formed opinion of him as a fitting protector and spouse.

I said little to my mother until I had suddenly, without warning, tested him. That he fully expected that I had refused the invitation by return of post was enough for me. He seemed particularly disgusted at the idea of Pinsuti, or any mere man, being a fitting chaperon for a girl under age. "He ought to know better, he has lived long enough," he bitterly remarked of my really kind patron.

I wrote a grateful refusal, stating that I was much obliged, and sorry that it was quite impossible for me to accept any engagement for Christmas and the New Year, and I showed the letter to my mother before I posted it.

Then began active warfare. I was evidently, in her opinion, a perfect scourge of God. I had to hear all that had been sacrificed on my behalf (by my dead grandfather, by the way), and I was anathematised as a scorpion—a wild cat—and the rest of the terms used, as I well know, by those poor feminine souls who are afflicted with the not yet understood nervous condition loosely termed "hysteria."

At last, after I had told her that I refused to obey her about entirely giving up the man I intended to marry—she, after a slight fit which alarmed and grieved me, but had no power to alter my settled determinations, went so far as to lock me into my bedroom, informing me that my meals would be served me there until "she had made arrangements to protect me from myself."

Then she went out.

Now, the cook in our establishment was a good—more than good—Catholic Irishwoman named Bridget. (Maloney was, I think, her surname.) She and her friend, Mary Somebody, a staid, rosy-faced, active little personage, had made up their minds to enter religion, and were already practising hours of prayer and incredibly early rising to snatch Mass before the day's work. They were, indeed, entirely wrapped up in their preparation before fulfilling their call to conventual life. The first time Bridget, the custodian of my temporary prison, came, she burst into sobs, brokenly saying, "Anything I can do, Miss? *I'm* not afraid of your Mar. *I'm* only afraid of ONE."

She let me out after I had told her the truth—that I was going to take refuge with an old, kind friend, the mother of an Aveley playmate. After packing a bag and consoling Bridget—whose sympathy was the most valuable external help I could have had at that juncture, knowing as I did that every thought of her pure heart was submitted to the direction of a saintly priest—I started forth, as it happened, never to return, leaving a note for my mother saying that as I never had been shut up and locked in, and never intended to be while I had life in me, I had gone to Mrs. Z. (For multifarious reasons I suppress the name.)

Mrs. Z. was the most delicate, dainty, and holy-minded of ladies. Brought up among distinguished personages, she had chosen—I shall always believe because of his exquisite simplicity and purity of mind and heart—to marry one of the "gentleman farmers" near Aveley.

She had been more than a mother to me. She had

been one of the greatest helps to my possible salvation, for she taught me, when I once "acted" to try to prolong my stay with my friend, her daughter Mary, the difference between truth and lies.

At that moment, stern though she was, she had seemed, to my young, horrified soul, transfigured. As she spoke I felt as if she were surrounded by flames of righteous wrath.

I loved her—for ever!

I knew she would guide me aright. I travelled to the old farm-house under the hill full of hope, to find her absent—summoned to Lichfield to the death-bed of a relative. Once more earthly obstacles barred my way.

Her eldest surviving daughter received me warmly. For years past her family and ours had been almost one in our sympathies, and she helped me in every way she could.

She helped me more than she had bargained for. Next morning came letters from my mother—one to me, one to Mrs. Z.

Mine was such a frantic effusion that I do not care to recall it; but as it threatened a descent upon me to convey me abroad to a convent "recommended by my director," where I might be "brought to my senses," I so entreated my sisterly friend to open the letter from my mother to hers, that, protesting that never in her life had she dared so unfilial a proceeding, she succumbed to my entreaties.

That letter was madder than mine was. Mrs. Z. was dared to harbour me; my mother's speedy arrival to convey me to "a place of safety" was stated.

My refuge was no more. . . . I started at once for London, and went straight to Mr. Jarrett, my future husband's stepfather, for advice.

"You must marry at once, before she has fulfilled her threat of making you a ward in Chancery," he said.

A temporary home was found for me; and although neither he nor I wished our fortunes to be so prematurely launched, in three weeks—after I had found no priest would marry a girl under age without the full consent of her parents—Louis Diehl and I were made man and wife in the old church of St. Giles'-in-the-Fields.

At once we started harder work, in what would now be called a "furnished flat," in Great Portland Street.

After our simple wedding luncheon at Mr. Jarrett's (unpleasantly interrupted by the arrival of a cab piled inside and out with everything I had ever possessed—ill-fastened bundles of letters and early MSS., the oldest boxes in the house, loosely packed with every old garment I had worn that happened to exist, and every portrait of me—these sent without cover) we both of us started our usual routine. My husband had a rehearsal to attend. I had a lesson to give at Broadwood's to a quaint, Scotch spinster lady, who always presented me with my fee neatly wrapped in paper when we parted, as if I were a physician. How it came about I don't know, but as the lesson was nearing its close I happened to tell her I had been married that morning. I shall never forget how she jumped up—as if, indeed, I had shot her—repeating that "she could not possibly take a lesson from a bride!" Nor would she return to

the piano, although she insisted on the usual bestowal of the fee.

Early in our married life my husband told me he had a hundred pounds in a Savings Bank. Being *dans les astres*, and having possibly inherited from "Eliza" a fond belief that the clouds must rain good fortune in our regard, this piece of intelligence was of indifferent interest. Indeed, what I was thoroughly enjoying was the fight for life, the battle to rise, mentally, morally, physically, by sheer effort, or, rather, a series of efforts, against heavy odds. I knew I was to be handicapped by the loss of all my friends beforehand. I had been warned by Mr. Sargood. My mother had evidently asked him —a distinguished lawyer, as well as astute man of the world—to intervene. He wrote me, care of Mr. Jarrett, that he had heard of my projected intentions.

"The lookers-on at the game invariably see more of the game than the players," he wrote, "and I shall be glad to see you here" (his offices) "at any time to discuss the situation."

I appointed a time—five o'clock, after my day's work was over—and called at his office somewhere in the legal West Central district. He received me kindly, in a room which was still under repair—the walls seemed white—there was much flaring gas. Then he, as he termed it, "placed the situation before me."

He certainly did not mince matters. He said that by marrying an orchestral violinist I was simply taking all the chances of my future and throwing them into the fire. "To marry, at all, now, would be the worst thing you could possibly do as a rising artist," he went on; "but to marry against your parents' wishes, literally

beneath you, is simply suicidal. If you want to marry, you have only to wait a little and you can pick and choose."

I told him I *had* chosen. It was all over. My mind was made up. "If you had anything to say against the moral character of the man I mean to marry I would reconsider matters, but I know beforehand that you have not!" I said.

"Moral character, alone, will not provide the loaves and fishes," was his remark. Then he placed before me what my future would be, bereft of all my present friends. He named all—except Mrs. Z.—that I had loved as older, admirable women, and said, naming them, that each one had promised my mother to "cut" me if I married against her wishes.

"If they do not want me, I do not want them!" I cried. (I have never wanted any one who did not want me, and I never shall, not even when the "any one" is my own child.)

Mr. Serjeant Sargood put the finishing touch to the utter hopelessness of the intervention asked by "Eliza" by patting my shoulder and imprinting a chaste, if patronising, paternal kiss on my hair (I dodged just in time to withhold my cheek). I went out blazing with inward wrath. No man, from my earliest childhood, had treated me in so slighting a fashion. So, because I was allying myself with a young man without capital, or rich relations to rob, I was to be regarded as "bucks" of bygone times regarded the low-born chambermaids who brought their warming-pans!

My bitter hatred of Mammon and his followers in-

tensified. Still, an awful grief at my practical ostracism by the older women I had loved and clung to threatened to reduce me to a state of abject weakness in which I could no longer fight. When I had walked clear of Mr. Sargood's office, I nearly collapsed. I had to support myself against a wall and wait awhile.

It was close to my own home. Home! Why, and when, and wherefore, had it ceased to be home? Why, and wherefore, had my mother ceased to be anything akin to a mother, or even motherly friend, such as my dear, now invalided godmother, or Mrs. Z., or even the motherly Miss Braine?

In my dreams I have often lived again that woeful hour when I crept into the quiet old square. The moon was shining in a starry sky. Gleams of yellow lamplight were visible in the lower windows of the once home, which my mother had tried to make my prison. I felt abject—a handful of dust. In a silent corner of the square, where the grass grew among the cobbles, and the housefronts were dark and still—while the statue of Queen Anne, which recalled my dear, lost hours with sweet Hester Karslake, shone white among the black, skeleton trees—I knelt down and pleaded with God.

"I feel like a bone the dogs are fighting for," I clamoured. "Oh, help me, or kill me!"

Good old German philosophical Zchokke, who had a big mind and an all-embracive literary genius—for the humour in his dainty stories is as potent as his profound insight into the deeper interests of life—has indulged in many sage words, which my father enjoyed

quoting at convenient seasons when they would be apposite.

One was, "A word *to* God is a word *from* God." Never in my life could I but endorse this as a truism.

I crept back to the friendly (but dirty) house where I lodged with a fat, good-natured hostess who had been accustomed to cater for musical people as well as "the profession" from her cradle, and next day took up my difficult life in patience.

The threats of my mother's friends were duly fulfilled. All my dear old friends tabooed me. I was ostracised. Although I was then teaching the daughters of Mr. Engelbach (manager of Coutts'), I would have given much to renounce the lessons. There was much latent scorn. But duty compelled. I took no notice, went and returned, did my work, and bore the humiliation patiently.

When I saw Mrs. Anderson in her carriage, and she turned away her head—when letters were written by me to old friends and were returned unopened—and still worse, when letters written by those who were still in ignorance of my marriage were scrawled upon, "Not known at Queen Square—try 244 Regent Street" (my husband's publishers), I began to wonder whether I was sane.

One comfort was my dear friend, Mary de Witte. Returning from abroad, she sought me out, and was kind and sympathetic. Mrs. de Witte invited and entertained us, as she would have entertained a distinguished couple whose marriage had pleased the world. Yet, she was a woman of the world, an adept

at those wonderful intricacies of worldly life which are as non-understandable to me as actual machinery.

For the bitterness of the appeals to my mother, advised by confessor and director, Father Eyre, returning unopened, there was a certain compensation in my entrance to what I may call my husband's world.

Not to face bare facts in life, and deal with them, after much thought, boldly, summarily, is folly. There are times and seasons when one must bravely say farewell to all the habits and customs of the past, and enter a fresh, new path, give one's whole self, one's whole energies, to the future.

In my case I had not only to look upon my past life as dead, but my relatives and all my so-called friends as well.

I stood alone, apart, with my young husband. One must have some sort of social world about one. I entered my husband's.

This artist, musical, and critical world contained many interesting personalities.

At Mr. Jarrett's, where we frequently dined, there were James Davison, prince of *raconteurs*, as well as the newest singers and other artists, and lesser lights in the journalistic world. Mr. Joseph Bennett, the present chief of the musical press and authority beyond appeal upon all matters connected with the art, was then a quiet, clever-looking young man, who spoke but little, but of whose gifts Davison spoke with the enthusiasm always shown when he recognised genius in a fellow-creature, prophesying the future distinction he has now attained. My husband was teaching the young nieces of Mlle. Tietjens, then in her

prime and the zenith of her fame. At her hospitable house we spent many a pleasant Sunday.

Tietjens (usually spelt Titiens) lived at a countrified little place in St. John's Wood. Ivy Cottage, a roomy, gabled house, covered with roses and other creepers, as well as by the perennial which gave it its name, might have been miles distant from the metropolis, with its kitchen and fruit garden, as well as lawns and shrubbery and poultry-yard. Here the big-hearted, generous-minded *diva* lived among her family—on bright summer days, mostly in the flower-garden in the rear of the cottage, where afternoon coffee, in German fashion, with German cakes, and the nice, familiar *Zwieback* (sugared rusk) would be served in and without the rustic arbour. Good old Frau Tietjens, a typical German mother, advanced in age, sat in the arbour placidly knitting and enjoying the lively talk of her juniors, albeit that of English she hardly understood a word. Madame Kruls, her distinguished sister's companion and housekeeper, a blue-eyed, bright-faced matron (mother of the two interesting nieces), was a spirited, genial woman, one who was prepared to defend her sister's interests in every way, and, in all kindliness and sympathy, was capable of doing it, too! Of the two girls, Augusta and Marie, Augusta was the gayer, wittier, and prettier; but Marie (afterwards Madame Bevignani) had the deeper, more Teutonic nature. A typical family party assembled on those green lawns Sunday afternoons, welcoming their guests with simple, friendly German cordiality.

Tietjens and her nieces and family were as good and tender to me as if they had known I had just lost

all relatives and friends by my marriage, which they certainly did not. Silent I was, all my life, so that no one has ever really known the ins and outs of that life. I am speaking now, once, and for all.

The Tietjens family, successful beyond their dreams through the genius of their Therese, were only rendered more sympathetic towards others who had not so good a fortune as themselves. Not only were their favoured intimates the celebrated singers who shared Therese's triumphs, and many of the renowned artists of the day, visitors and residents, but those who had still to climb the artistic ladder were encouraged and helped. I saw many of these during my visits to Ivy Cottage, and afterwards to the house in the main road to which Tietjens subsequently removed. Therese took a particular interest in young aspirants who hoped to make a living by vocal art. A notable instance was that of a shy, sweet, pretty little girl, Mathilde Bauermeister (who later spelt her name Baumeister). The great singer believed in her and in her voice, and made her sing before people, finally securing her for small parts at Her Majesty's Theatre (then a potent rival to the Covent Garden Opera), and thereby literally giving her her start in a career which is known to most opera-goers here and elsewhere.

One great witness to the largeness of Tietjens' heart was the significant fact that every Sunday many "covers" were laid in an anteroom for any German who appealed to her for help, to be royally dined. The impecunious Germans have no scruple, as all Germans resident in England know, to seek out and

ask help of their more fortunate compatriots. To many of the prosperous this confiding tendency is, to say the least, a conspicuous bore, but Tietjens never tired in her good Samaritanism. The unfortunate who clamoured to her were not only fed and sympathised with, but were not allowed to depart without tangible help.

Then, she had a singular delicacy of feeling. When I seemed somewhat depressed one day—doubtless after the return of one of those fortnightly appeals to my mother which Father Eyre insisted upon, unopened—she started a game of "lotto," herself calling the numbers. The pool—she made the forfeits somewhat heavy—was at its fullest, when suddenly all the numbers called seemed mysteriously on my cards. While others contributed to the overflowing pool, I covered my numbers, and in a very short time I was winner. So stupid am I when games are on the *tapis* that until my husband afterwards told me that she had glanced at my cards under her eyelids and had steadily fictionised the numbers thereon, I had not suspected that I was only the winner of an agreeable sum of money through a kindly freak of the great soprano.

Another most amiable *diva* was Madame Liebhart, only lately deceased. My husband was teaching her English ballads. The English pronunciation was terribly difficult to her, although at last she surmounted it very creditably. We dined often at her pretty villa, and met many distinguished musicians, not only those who hailed from Vienna, where she had had a triumphant career as light soprano in

opera, but by many established London celebrities. Besides being a *diva*, she had a decided talent for cooking—cooking, in her case, of course, being the laying down of the law to a cook by profession, and insisting on that law being fulfilled to the letter.

There was one dish which was a *gourmet's* dream. A "Strudel" is a "Charlotte" of apple, pastry, spices, almonds, and other ingredients, which render it a mysterious, delicious food, which is as rare, yet delightful, as those peppered cream tarts I used to wonder about, mentioned often in *The Arabian Nights*, must have been.

Other new friends were both the distinguished bass singers, Charles Santley and Giacomo Foli (as Foli Italianised his Irish name of James Foley). Santley was then a slim, blue-eyed young man, with the Norseman *bonhomie*, frankness, and fellow-feeling for humanity. His reputation as opera and oratorio singer was increasing by leaps and bounds; but then, as at this day, it left him as staunch a Briton and true-hearted a north-countryman as he ever was, and certainly will remain to the very end. Then, it was his magnificent voice which overpowered criticism and compelled enthusiasm; but before he had been long in the musical profession he showed all the qualities of the learned, thoughtful musician—that which makes, at this day, any song sung by him as great a delight to the fastidious *connoisseur* as was some simple song sung by Jenny Lind, even to the end of her life.

Foli began his career an unlettered musician; but by dint of perseverance and a great faculty for that patient, unwearied plodding which alone makes for

perfection, his singing also showed not only culture, but mental thought and entire devotion to his art.

Tall, blue-eyed, dark-haired Irish giant! There was a broad, comforting geniality about him in private life which created good humour around him. When he welcomed one in his huge voice, one felt a quiver under one's feet as when deep pedal-pipes are brought into action. But there was always present the Hibernian spirit of mingled buoyancy and humour; yes, and overflowing hospitality, which made him ever welcome to his fellow-creatures in all times and places.

Other musicians I learnt to know and admire at this time were Sainton, my father's old chum, and his wife, the artistic singer, Madame Sainton-Dolby. In those days there would be one great English soprano or contralto where now there are perhaps a score. Madame Sainton-Dolby had but few rivals to contest her easy supremacy. Antoinette Sterling had not arrived. Among the two or three who could take important rôles in oratorio (or opera) Miss Bessy Palmer had the finest voice, the greatest musical inspiration; was, in fact, the most greatly gifted. Miss Palmer's charming volume of reminiscences is still fresh in the public memory.

Then there was that remarkable woman, Madame Rudersdorff. I had been introduced to her before my marriage by Signor Randegger; and when we were in the "artists' room" of different concert halls, she invariably found me a seat by her side, and kept me there, introducing me to the various performers who came up to talk to her. But she was one of the persons —very few they are—who inspired me with a certain

feeling of fear. Her cleverness was as alarming as the brilliant ease with which she displayed it. Her straight, handsome features lent her a sternness which was not belied by her dark, searching eyes. I always felt, even when she graciously smiled upon me, that those eyes looked into my soul, saw all the latent evil, and credited me with it. Hence my discomfiture in her society.

But it was a more womanly, motherly Madame Rudersdorff who received me in her pretty cottage home as the young wife of "one of her good boys," as she termed my husband. It was a perfectly arranged little domicile; Madame Rudersdorff was a queen of order, arrangement, management. Quite a flower fancier, her garden was a choice one; and I remember the pardonable pride with which she showed us a bed of geraniums named after herself as their "inventor."

Speaking, as one might term it, any number of languages, she seemed to have read all and everything in the great literature of the world. It would have been hard to find the author or work of any note that this extraordinary woman was unacquainted with; and she seemed to me, when I was privileged to see the diaries and notebooks whose pages were covered with her exquisite handwriting, as if she herself, had she so elected, could easily have been a greater star in literature than she was in the musical world.

And that epitome of brain-power in womanhood lies in an unburied coffin far away in some obscure state of the U.S. America (or thereabouts. It may be Australia; I am not sure).

She directed in her will that she should be thus mausoleumed: dressed in black, with a mantilla, a glass plate in the roof of the casket, leaving her features visible—in a rustic hut in a wood belonging to an estate she had purchased. This, I believe, was carried out at the time. Whether this peculiar method of burial—which many people who have a horror of entombment would like in their own case—has since been interfered with, I have not heard. But the idea of the lonely coffin laid in a rustic hut in a wood by a lake—the rustling of the trees above and around and the lapping of the wavelets upon the pebbly beach her never-ending dirge—is at least a poetical ending to a life of strenuous work, unvarying effort, and much achievement.

CHAPTER XIV

THE year 1864 we made good strides in the profession. I gave a concert (to introduce some pupils), played in other people's concerts (notably that of Christine Nilsson), and became the possessor of a very decent little clientèle of amateur pianoforte players. We were married December 7th, 1863. On the 21st of November, 1864, our first-born son, who but a few months ago died of phthisis, was born.

I was at my last gasp, seemingly, when the doctor —hitherto my doctor, doctors fortunately do not "take sides" in the unseemly quarrels of relatives who happen to be their patients—sent his wife to ask my mother to come to me.

"Eliza" imitated the great ones of the earth with whom she formerly consorted in the non-admittance of visitors to her presence until she had made herself acquainted through a third person of the nature of their errand or business.

In this case Mrs. S.'s urgent summons was duly conveyed to the dining-room, where "Eliza sat at meat," by a maid-servant, and the maid-servant brought back the reply:

"Tell Mrs. S. I have only one daughter, and she is with me."

(This *par parenthèse.*)

I struggled back to life with vigorous efforts for the sake of the boy who was so absurdly like my beloved grandfather. The responsibility, meanwhile, of being the custodian of another soul newly born into this woeful world, which had made me shudder, had haunted me, perplexed me, nearly overwhelmed me beforehand, was almost more than, in my abject weakness, I could bear. His baptism (by Father Hearn, at our parish church, Warwick Street) was a partial relief. But I hardly dared allow him out of my sight. So fearful was my misgiving of trusting a strange nurse with this precious babe, that I ferreted out an old Sunday-school girl of mine in my pre-Catholic days, whom I had trained and tested, and actually domiciled her recently married husband as well as herself in the unfurnished upper part of a house in Weymouth Street, to which we speedily removed, to ensure her care of my child while I was, perforce, absent.

There are now so many beautiful babes, as well as lovely children, that it seems almost foolish to record how this sunny-haired, blue-eyed, high-spirited boy-baby attracted the admiration of all and sundry. Then we all three fell ill by blood-poisoning, and a speedy removal to the outskirts of the city was ordered by the doctor.

A row of houses in an open road leading up to Tufnell Park, Holloway, attracted me. From the front windows, beyond a crescent of garden and young trees, with a scattered half-dozen houses on its right, were visible fields—then Hampstead and Highgate, with the church spires I knew so well. Here we settled, for fresh air and brilliant sunshine seemed to pour into

the pretty little eight-roomed dwelling. It was too far from his work for my good Kate's husband. But a great good fortune befell. I found a couple of wonderful maids—each other's friends from childhood, who had, as it were, cast in their lot together, and were, from their experiences in the cases of others, sworn enemies to matrimony. Their names were Bessy and Eliza. Bessy was the nurse *par excellence*. To her lively companionship I have always credited the foundation of the brain-development of my cleverest child. Eliza was a thrifty housekeeper. Everything was paid for daily. We did not "run bills." We had saved a hundred pounds between us the first year of our marriage, and nearly equalled it the second, even the third and idyllic year of peaceful domesticity.

The year after my boy's birth I remember as one of such horrible weakness in myself that every effort cost me indescribable suffering. I thought, after my experience of illness, that this must mean the approach of death; and with a yearning for my father, who had never been cruel to me, I dared so far as to write to *him*.

I say dared, for it was a forlorn hope. To appeal to him except through her would, I knew, be taken by "Eliza" as an insult.

I expected nothing. I had done my duty. If I died I could not be reproached that I had not made every effort to induce my parents to accept the situation.

I had almost forgotten my letter, for it was my habit to force myself to forget my appeals as soon as they were posted—my director was now a Dominican Father, even stricter than my good friend, Father Eyre, and

insisted upon periodical letters—when, while I was working away at some child's garment (I found the womanly duty of needlework a perfect staff of consolation throughout my life), I saw my father pass the little front garden.

I heard his knock. I flew to the door. He was as deeply moved as I was. I shall never forget his words.

"If it had been left to me, I should have been here *long* ago!" he brokenly exclaimed.

I was his sworn ally for life. Meanwhile I confess that even in his finest moments my father showed the lamentable weakness of being overpowered by a woman. No matter how clever the woman, the man is her superior; and to render him anything but that, by threats or the process familiarly termed "worrying him out of his life," is, in the opinion of many sound minds, akin to a crime.

For once my father had dominated. That my mother had yielded unwillingly to a reconciliation I knew by her reception of us the following Sunday, according to an invitation my father had personally conveyed. I might have been an indifferent acquaintance she had met a few hours previously; and my sister, then a child of twelve, showed a shrinking and reluctance to approach me which told its own tale.

But the boy-baby, with his laughing eyes and joyous crowing, his readiness to make friends with every one and be delighted with everything, helped the unnatural situation. His likeness to his great-grandfather Vidal, which remained conspicuous to his last hour, was recognised with unanimity.

But that day seemed to strike a deadly chill to my heart. Heaven forgive me! I felt I would rather have remained absolutely alienated from my family for years than have been received by my only immediate feminine relatives as a stranger.

That year we gave a successful concert, helped by Mr. Jarrett in the friendly assistance of artists such as the tenor Gardoni, who, in spite of the tell-tale date of his birth, looked still young, Madame Monbelli, a favourite *cantatrice* at Her Majesty's Opera, and others. Then had come 1866, and the birth of the daughter, named Henrietta after my dead sister, who has since been my close companion and most devoted and tenderest friend.

The year 1867 ranks mostly in my mind as the year Henselt arrived in England on a visit to his old friends, my father and mother.

Between August, 1858, and August, 1867, Henselt had suffered a greater change than usually befalls ordinary mankind in nine years. Then a fine, handsome man, seemingly in only early middle age, he was now, to all appearance, the old man pure and simple. His close-cut hair was silvered. His once clear, luminous eyes looked thickly out from under his grizzled brows. He was a mass of caprice and contradiction. He glanced slightingly at the food set before him and demanded something else. At breakfast (I was staying in the house to help where I could) he would not touch even the daintiest "plats," cooked and served with extremest care, but demanded several lightly boiled eggs, served together, shelled, in a basin, which he ate (gobbled?), his elbows on the table, his head for-

ward over the table-napkin tucked under his chin, *sans* salt, *sans* pepper, *sans* bread, *sans* everything else, in a manner which, if he had not been Henselt, I should have considered disgusting; afterwards pushing forward the basin, throwing his table-napkin aside, and stalking off upstairs to the piano Erards had picked out for him, and beginning to thunder upon it.

Henselt had breakfasted, therefore there was no further need for breakfast in the establishment. That is how an outsider would have described his procedure.

A clever writer in the *Daily Chronicle* once hugely delighted me by terming a character in the novel of mine he or she was reviewing as "pernickety."

Coined words are often a pity, sometimes a reflection upon, even an insult to, the magnificent English language. But this particular expression means so much, that I at once mentally hugged it with delight.

People possessed of genius are always more or less "pernickety." Some, like Tschaikowsky, Chopin, and other musicians, as well as literary stars, have been "pernickety" in mind, in soul, and then indeed it means mischief. But some are merely "pernickety" on the surface, which hurts no one, if it irritates. Henselt was essentially one of these.

If it was suggested that he might do this, or go there, he disgustedly shook his head and shrugged his shoulders.

When various important persons were invited to meet him, he obstinately refused to understand who they were. Ella was invited to dine; my mother had asked him before she had fully gauged the vast gulf between

the generous host of the past and the difficult guest of the present. She was in despair beforehand. It was certainly an odd entertainment.

I happened to meet Ella on the doorstep. I was in mourning for my brother-in-law. The little man was more Punch-like and self-enraptured than ever. He asked me, as he shook hands, "how long I had been a widow?" When I disclaimed that sad if honourable state, he said, "Dear me! I thought your husband was dead. Somebody died; who was it?" To my relief, we were then admitted.

When Henselt stalked suddenly into the drawing-room, he stood on the hearthrug and stared in silence at Ella, while the little creature talked volubly at him in his truly Anglicanised French. Whether the great pianist understood Ella then, or subsequently at the dinner-table, when, Ella at his side, chattering as he watched his steady feeding with a fascinated gaze, I could not tell. But by his querulous aside in German afterwards, "Who *is* this man with his Musical Union?" I think he was too bored by him to take the trouble to comprehend.

Ella's verdict upon Henselt was, "The most ill-tempered brute I ever sat at table with." Henselt must certainly have seemed odd after the bulk of foreign musicians, who, when they wished to make Ella their stepping-stone to a season in London, or, when using the stepping-stone, they intended to use it again, were akin to slavish cajolers—courtiers to King Punchinello.

Ella did not hear my master play. No one ever asked Henselt to play. Had such an insult, as he would have considered it, been offered him, he would have stalked

wrathfully from the room, wherever it might be, and would most probably have never entered it again.

At his Gersdorf castle, where he lived in semi-royal fashion, he would, on rare occasions, when some favoured friend was staying there or when in his very extremest good humour, vouchsafe that on that day, at a certain hour, he would play. This meant much hurrying to and fro, many a hasty summons far and near, for the musical chief expected an audience if he deigned to signify his pleasure to perform. Even then his lady wife had her embarrassments. Her capricious lord had his pet aversions, and were one of these unfortunate persons among his auditors, had been known to refuse to carry out his intention of playing a programme. (For when he once began to play he liked to go on.)

One of those for whom he felt an antipathy akin to that some people feel in regard to a toad or a snake, or anything else in creation, was the good, hard-working little wife of the village pastor. In particular, he objected to her speaking voice, which was certainly not agreeable. "She screeches like a peacock," he said. "Her hands are like nutmeg-graters. She dresses like a servant. Her nose turns up, and she has gooseberry eyes. I don't want her near me!"

Still, the dear, good, faithful, unselfish little soul was really loved by Frau von Henselt, and on the occasion when Jove came down from his throne to unbend to the *canaille*, and I was there, I saw the "Frau Pastor" smuggled into a charming corner, with a specially comfortable chair, but well beyond the range of Henselt's eyes.

I have often thought what a much nicer life people unfortunately connected with those descended in any way whatever from the rulers of the world would have, if only those rulers had not been self-elected patriarchs. For the "children of the bondwoman" have, in most cases, a more exaggerated opinion of the importance attaching to their distinguished paternity than the "children of the free." On a particular day—the special day of Henselt's last visit to England in 1867, when he had consented, after pressure was brought to bear upon him by Mr. Broadwood and others, to give an invitation recital in the largest room at Great Pulteney Street—I suffered acutely from the clashing of wills of two who considered the blood of kings in their veins sufficient excuse for being supreme over all and sundry—"bar none!"

Henselt—at the early luncheon, which was supplied at the usual hour, when he always partook of "zweiter Frühstuck"—had announced his intention, in his imperial manner, of walking to Broadwood's. We four, my father, husband, myself, and Henselt, started to walk. But, to my amazement, when we reached the cabstand, which was scarcely a hundred yards from the Queen Square house, my husband hailed a four-wheeler, and simply "bundled" me in, hoisted in Henselt after me, how or in what manner I could not describe, for I never knew—and evidently gave his directions to the cabman, for the Jehu drove off at a smart pace and took no notice of his fares until he arrived at 33 Great Pulteney Street.

Henselt's rage—impotent rage, for his shoutings out of the window were taken no notice of by the instructed

driver—was a painful experience. He alternately yelled and tapped at the window, and vociferated at me. What he said I did not pay any attention to. My fear was, that when he met my husband face to face, there would be mischief.

I need not have troubled. He alighted and entered the dear old house of so many memories—a house where Chopin played, where Weber staggered here and there in those strange last spurts of energy known to all who know "consumption"—as mild and innocently pleased as a satisfied lamb, who, after wanderings, has found its mother.

A representative audience had assembled in the big chamber—handsome room enough in itself, but now denuded of instruments and beautifully adorned with red cloth, green plants, white chairs, and a flowery platform. Mr. Hipkins actively mourned the flight from town of so many great English musicians. They would, he knew, be lastingly disappointed that they had missed the chance of hearing a pianist-composer who, though world-renowned, was still as an executant a musical "veiled prophet of Khorassan." Some of the more prominent of the British musical great ones, however, had not yet left town, and others were not far enough away not to respond in person to the urgent telegrams. I could not say who was there or who was not, or who, indeed, sat at my right hand; but on my left in the front seats was the sweetly pretty, charming child-daughter Edith of my staunch friend Mr. Hipkins, who was later to distinguish herself as a painter, and to hang her poetical pictures year after year on the Academy walls.

Henselt played splendidly, as far as it went. For, for one thing, his cherished trick of enlarging wholesale upon other composers' works had led to his impatience of music calculated purely and simply for the pianoforte and its capacities, such as the classics of Mozart, Beethoven, and the rest who succeeded them, and his endeavour to render the viceroy of keyed instruments (viceroy because the organ is king) a sort of orchestrion.

He played little that day but orchestral compositions arranged by himself for the pianoforte. He played magnificently. (I saw that he had partially abandoned the tight wrist theory, by the way, and only ignored the wrist-joint when thundering from the shoulder.) But he had acquired such mannerisms, that if his auditors had been betrayed into a titter under their breath, even while they applauded, I could not have blamed them. One of these was that at the end of each musical feat he suddenly jumped sideways on the big, square Broadwood music-stool, clutched it with both hands, and stared in a silly manner at his audience like a clown in a pantomime.

He was a genius, therefore a child of eternity. Are not these supremely clever creatures, so far above the rest in gifts, more than ordinary human beings? They seem to me, after my experiences with many of them, purely and simply the babes of the universe. They must be here for a purpose. But to treat them as we treat folk in general, shows want of judgment. They belong to another plane. This is their nursery; and what can be expected of infants who cannot possibly grow out of babyhood because they lack anything

more in this restricted world than mere initial conditions? Only what we get, and no more!

Henselt came and went in minor comet-like fashion. I never heard any one's personal impressions of his playing on that occasion, as—excepting Mr. Hipkins, whose wont it was to be enigmatical when occasion demanded critical tact—most of the musical people I personally knew had fled from August heat in the metropolis. Of any journalistic record of the one and only performance of a man whose compositions are still alive, and promise to live as long as the pianoforte for which he penned them, I am ignorant.

Speaking of remarkably gifted beings recalls a most agreeable occasion when I met one of the authors whose fiction formed my only recreation in those busy days of teaching to help keep my beloved babies, and working vigorously for them in my dear little home.

Elizabeth Philp had a most extraordinary capacity for friendship, as well as for securing the liking and confidence of clever people, were they literary, musical, or wedded to art, or were they brain-workers in any of the other professions. She was more than a sister to me. When absent she thought of me; and at that time, when I was glued to my home, as it were, as well as bound to shirk every expenditure except that absolutely necessary for the children's sake, she contrived to unearth and produce me among her various distinguished friends by many a generous stratagem.

The summer before my eldest daughter was born, the authoress of so many interesting and thoughtful novels, Mrs. J. H. Riddell, gave a garden party at her

beautiful, rural cottage in Hornsey, and Miss Philp brought me a special invitation.

The "Green Lanes" were really green lanes then! As we drove from our suburban dwelling northwards, houses became fewer and fewer, flowery hedges bordered arable land as well as grass fields of feeding cattle. No tramcar or omnibus had as yet dragged London still farther into the country. Mrs. Riddell's retreat must have previously been a rustic farm-house. There was a conservatory entrance—a flower garden between the house and the road, and beyond the fruit and vegetable garden at the back of the house, barns stood in the green fields—barns used by the Riddells as storehouses for the zinc and iron things—they looked like engine-boilers, tanks, "coppers"—which had some, to me, mysterious connection with the City business of which the authoress' husband was principal partner. Mrs. Riddell, a fair-haired, blue-eyed, tall, undulating Irishwoman, with a gentle, insinuating, almost diffident manner, received her incoming guests —mostly, as she had hitherto lived a hermit life, Miss Philp's friends and acquaintances—dressed in floating white muslin. Then we wandered about the garden. My good friend Mr. Hipkins was there—and I remember the tall, auburn-haired Mr. John Boosey standing on a lawn, his bright, handsome wife talking cheerily at his side, gazing at an apple tree laden with fruit with evident enjoyment. Mr. Hipkins escorted me round the kitchen garden, and out of his usual habit of sympathy, endeavoured to join in my ecstasy at the—to me —dear, familiar sight of growing green vegetables, and gooseberry and currant trees with their white and

crimson berries. Oh, those dead and gone garden days! What anguish was their memory—what pained delight to be once more in a rural spot!

Then came a concert. The large barn had been cleared, stocked with chairs, and "Cead Mille Failthe" in large painted letters welcomed us all above the decorated platform specially erected at the end opposite the entrance, upon which stage was conspicuous a concert grand of Broadwood's.

Miss Philp and other vocalists sang. I played. Then we wandered back into the gardens, enjoyed a choice collation in a tent, and returned to the barn, to find it arranged for dancing. Ending with a moonlight drive home, that festival coloured my after-days for some time. It stands out, now, more than forty years after, clear, distinct, a golden memory. For, above all things, Mrs. Riddell, at its close, led me into her little library — where a swift glance around showed me numerous novels on her shelves, Mrs. Norton's having a conspicuous place—and, with many sweet words, gave me a jewel "in memoriam."

"You are so fascinating," she said. "How is it? It is such a peculiar gift." Then she kissed me, and, almost overcome—for to me literary genius has been ever godlike—I departed, mentally intoxicated with the glory of an embrace from a literary goddess.

Early in 1868 my second son was born. Ill-health ensued. I was wild to be well, for part of our income was easily earned by my husband in spring and autumn by the operatic tours with Mapleson. I struggled to my feet, and at three weeks went to the church to be blessed, in the usual way.

It was my first experience of that wonderful orator, Father James Conolly. Even in my deadly weakness I felt amusement.

"Man, you have brought me a corpse to be churched," he first said, in his whole-hearted impetuosity. I had hard work to convince him I was really recovered.

I was not. I learnt the folly of forcing fate immediately after. I went to my husband's schools to teach his pupils, with a neglected abscess which burst internally and produced a pleurisy which permanently injured the lung. Working with my own pupils as well, I recollect that spring as the nearest approach to a physical hell that I have as yet endured.

I became a wretched shadow. I went about, and worked, all through that pitiful summer, like some poor soul in purgatory. There had been an initial internal operation—the wound was active.

The one sympathy I had came from "Lizzie Philp." My illness had reduced my number of pupils. There could be no month at the seaside for the three babes this year. But for my eldest—the delicate, beautiful, clever Louis—came, together with myself, a perfect boon from heaven.

Old Mr. Philp—the active, white-haired veteran father of "Lizzie"—who, in his Cornwall capacity in the early century of *Times* correspondent, had brought the news of the victory of Trafalgar to London, posting from Falmouth as fast as post-horses could go—came suddenly, early one morning, at the beginning of the summer holidays, to propose that I should start that night with him for Cornwall, to be the pianist in a

Cornish tour arranged, at the spur of the moment, by the enterprising Lizzie—a tour in which she would figure as soprano, and the recently arrived Antoinette Sterling, who had studied with her at the Cologne Conservatoire, and specially under Ferdinand Hiller, the contralto. There would be further arrangements for my husband to join as "solo violin," bringing our curly-haired Louis.

I shall never forget the journey—begun late at night—in a second-class carriage, crowded principally with the domestic servants of the rich. Opposite me was a liveried man-servant, supporting a veiled parrot cage on his knees. Occasionally the parrot remarked upon the strange condition in which he found himself, in a manner not only pert, but bordering upon the profane. Had I not felt like a wild creature released from a den into the open country, I should have envied him his latitude.

No! a night journey in a crowded second-class compartment is not desirable for an invalided person. (Poor wretch! poor drag upon the wheels of happier humanity!) We arrived at Plymouth without my having secured "a wink of sleep."

At Plymouth we two had just congratulated ourselves upon being safely in an empty compartment, where we might doze during the slow progress to Falmouth, when a little clergyman sprang in; as it proved, a friend in need.

He was the Reverend William Borrow, of Heigham Vicarage, Bury St. Edmunds—related to the famous author of *Lavengro*—and a passionate music lover. As soon as he understood the object of our journey he

entered heart and soul into our plans, and while I slept on a comfortable couch of his arrangement, talked with Mr. Philp of a concert at Plymouth, also one at Truro, his destination and parental home, provided Miss Philp gave her consent.

Falmouth may have changed since 1868, as other places have changed. But it was then a beautiful town, its houses rising tier upon tier above the harbour. That grey morning, the pearly tints of sky, sea, and slate roofs glistening with the moisture of a fine rain or heavy mist, lent it a picturesque beauty which I have seen recorded in paintings by modern Italian artists who have pictured Venice under such conditions, but hardly elsewhere.

Most comfortable apartments were provided by good Lizzie for her party—herself, soprano; the fine, handsome Antoinette Sterling, contralto; and myself, pianist; my husband, violinist; and a Mr. Mitchell, of Plymouth celebrity, tenor.

Mr. Philp was to be concert-agent, and would precede us to the towns selected. The arrangements occupied about a week, during which Antoinette, after our practice together—I was determined to accompany her without book, to enhance the effect of her songs, the most attractive of which were Schumann's "Ich grolle nicht" and the old English ballad "The Three Ravens"—took it into her handsome head to go a-riding.

Horse exercise had been a yearned-for and impossible happiness in my life. I seconded her with acclamation. We hired horses and rode about for some days with éclat. But one day, accompanying

Lizzie Philp (in a vehicle) to a pupil's house some miles out of Falmouth, we suffered a rude reverse.

We had left the open fly, and were loitering a mile or two beyond the house where Lizzie had halted. We were gazing quite enraptured at the exquisite sub-tropical gardens winding down to the blue Atlantic—gardens belonging to some fortunate member of the Fox family, where fuchsias not only lived, but even bloomed through the winter, where camellias flourished in the open, and laurels grew to an incredible height—when suddenly I heard a plunge and an exclamation, and saw both Antoinette and her steed struggling up from the road, Antoinette covered with dust, and the poor horse bleeding at the knees.

The contralto of many public triumphs had perfect self-possession. She would not allow me to dismount, but led her poor steed back to where Miss Philp and her carriage were at a standstill. The horse was left in the stables, attended to by the coachman, and afterwards fetched. He had been "down" before.

It was a bright August morning when we started in our roomy travelling-carriage—luggage on the roof, either my husband or Mr. Mitchell on the box-seat with the delighted, golden-haired little Louis, while we ladies were inside. We gave an evening concert at Helston and other places with more or less success, pecuniary and artistic. The bulk of the party went out during the day and enjoyed themselves, but I had to spend the afternoon arranging a Brussels-net overdress which had to be taken to pieces for packing and re-established over its black silk foundation each day.

This was economy. The first gown I had allowed

myself to buy after my marriage to poverty and struggle was a black silk of Bonnet's, with two bodices. The overdress had been made by a French milliner recommended by a feminine compatriot, and I had shed tears of compunction over her bill of £3. 18s.

In that charming carriage-tour—which paid its expenses, but no more—that which struck me most was the various tastes of our audiences. At each town a different item of the programme would strike home to the sympathies of the hearers, and be demanded again and again. At Helston, Antoinette Sterling's simple songs excited extraordinary enthusiasm; at Truro, I scored an unexpected success with my pianoforte pieces; while in the big hall at Plymouth, Antoinette's songs went for very little, Lizzie's contributions were but languidly received, the audience talked freely during the pianoforte solos, but when my husband played "Yankee Doodle," with variations, they simply went wild to a man, and shriekingly encored the last squeaks in the harmonics again and again.

"Strange," said Antoinette, sitting statuesque and patient in the artists' room.

"Absurd!" said I. That night the indignities of the musical profession came home to me more than they had ever done before. We were invited to sup at the Mayor's, and there was a representative Cornish collation; but the Mayoress, languidly icy, sat opposite her genial spouse, and neither ate nor drank with her invited guests. The aristocracy of birth rank artists as they rank all those who minister to their pleasures, from the dear dogs and horses upwards. But, in many cases, to the aristocracy of wealth we remain—mountebanks.

I had often thought of writing *The Story of a Black Silk Dress*—so many and varied were the adventures of that black silk frock of mine.

For instance, its first appearance with its white net flouncings and furbelows was at an interesting dinner given by Sir Sydney Waterlow to various artists at the Mansion House (I have mentioned this before). Through much success in the management of the voice of a brilliant young relative of Sir Sydney's, my husband had become vocal professor in Sir Sydney's family and among their friends. Hence the invitation. Jenny Lind was there, at Sir Sydney's right hand; from my seat opposite I contemplated her whenever she appeared beyond the magnificent gold trophy. After eating dainty viands off gold, with gold implements, I was differently dazzled by Jenny Lind's sympathy, Jenny Lind's approval, after I had played.

She came to me where I was sitting on a big sofa. "You are a born artist—a true musician," she earnestly said.

There are moments in one's life when one would like the veto "Finis" to be pronounced above. That was one, in my poor existence. When Jenny Lind was transporting the world of music in London by her operatic performances, years before, my elder sister Etta was once smuggled into a box, together with my mother, by the generous box-proprietor, a certain Mr. Stokes, whom his favoured girl friends familiarly called "Stokey." She "crowed" over me persistently ever afterwards. When there was a question of musical experiences, she would pity me for "not having heard Jenny Lind." What would she have thought and said,

if she could have known, then, that not only would I hear Jenny Lind sing, inimitably, in an inspired manner, the touching ballad of "Auld Robin Gray," —and at the Mansion House, after a private dinner—but that, in an earnest, convincing way, she would hail me as a younger sister in the world of art?

(Moral, never "crow over" any one. Ever remember that "the first shall be last, the last first!")

That little silk frock had many experiences. But these demand another chapter.

CHAPTER XV

THE year 1868 was not the brightest of all years in my memory. Still, during its progress, I met my former kind patron, Lord Dudley, who was so shocked at the change in my appearance that he recommended me to winter abroad, and promised that wherever I might choose to pitch my tent he would do all in his power to help me.

Accordingly, early in November, I, with my three children and their nurse, started for Nice, armed with many valuable letters of introduction to important residents. There had been a furious gale, succeeded by calm and an intensified frost. Our crossing from Folkestone was an experience. The captain, in mid-Channel, deliberated about "putting back." His prostrate passengers would have acquiesced, in their abject condition, I believe, had he suggested sinking the steamer. When we had weathered the after-effects of the storm, dry land seemed an impossible beatitude.

A railway journey seemed nothing—Paris a Paradise. I made for the Hotel Castiglione—with a memory of the de Wittes and visits to them there. We slept; then I chartered a *remise*, and with nurse and babies drove to renew Paris acquaintances. First to Erard's, Rue du Mail, to ask about pianos at Nice. Madame

Erard was at La Muette with her beloved family; Monsieur Schaeffer was absent; but I saw the little white-haired skull-capped manager, who had been very kind to me seven years ago, and he was giving me sage advice, much to the point, when I heard the glass doors behind us shut, and turning, saw—Ernst Lubeck.

We must all—or certainly most of us—have experiences of these strange coincidences. I was a day only in Paris, and I met my recalcitrant suitor!

That was all he was in my eyes. For a moment or two he stood, as if paralysed with astonishment, then he came forward and greeted me.

"I heard of your marriage, years ago," he said. "But you don't mean to say those cherubs in the *remise* I have been making friends with are yours?"

"They are," I said. "And you—you are married, and have doubtless cherubs of your own."

"I have no children," he said, somewhat sadly. Then he inquired into my objective in this Paris visit; and when he heard I was *en route* to Nice, he said a favourite pupil of his, Mrs. Evans (wife of the well-known courtier-dentist, whose aid in the escape of the Empress Eugénie from revolutionary France, a few years later, has been detailed in his recently published memoirs), was bound for a winter in Nice with her husband. He would beg her to regard me as a sacred trust confided to her by him, and he hoped I would look upon her as an elder sister, and allow her to be my guide, adviser, and friend.

I was much obliged. When he said he hoped I would allow him to send a trusty *commissionaire* he employed, to help in starting us for the night journey

in prospect, I was also obliged. But when he added, "I would be there myself, but the illness of my mother-in-law keeps me at home, evenings," the tiger-devil we all of us keep chained on our premises (may I, and every one else, keep him chained until we deliver him, innocent of harm, into the hands of the Angel of Death) sprang up within me and leapt at him through my eyes.

It is a terrible feeling; so acute as to be almost physical. I smile sadly when I see those the chained tiger glares at through my eyes recoil. Why will not people believe and understand? A person may be cursed with a devil fighting against him and his Maker, active in his soul—but the supernatural chain keeps that fiend securely bound. If we trusted to some flimsy chain of our own making, we might, many of us, be criminals. I have always felt that. When I have read of the awful fates of unhappy felons, I have known that they never, never prayed.

I saw Lubeck recoil, his green eyes grow greener, as he stammered out a confused sentence, "I did not marry until long after you married."

I gave him another look—at least, the chained devil did. Then I rose—we had been seated on *fauteuils* removed from the concert-room—and said good-bye, thanking him for his kindness about Mrs. Evans and the *commissionaire*. He looked spent and livid as he waited while I talked further with Monsieur the manager (I forget his name), and as he followed me down the steps and kissed the children, who had greeted his appearance with cries of delight.

I never saw him again. Only a few years after, he was seized with madness, and died insane.

I may add, in parenthesis, that my husband's remark when the news came to London, was, "If he had married you, he would have gone mad before now." What a mercy it is that our husbands do not publish these pretty compliments to the world!

My next visit was to whichever of the Messrs. Galignani reigned in the offices of the business house that day. It happened to be the old bachelor, Mr. Antony. At first he did not recognise me. (Little wonder! The joys of matrimony had seemingly spent their time in the active destruction of all appearance of youth and well-being!) When he remembered, he was sympathetic, and gave me many valuable hints as to my procedure in the flowery health-resort on the perennially summer sea.

On to Mr. Wyld's studio in the Rue Blanche. I had an enthusiastic welcome and more than enthusiastic reception of my beautiful babes. Indeed, so in love did the painter fall with the dream of beauty in childhood—my beloved first-born child, Louis—that he said if I was not staying in Paris to enable him to paint his portrait, he must needs take a flight to Nice to do so.

I had a letter from him later, sent on from the Hôtel de France, at Nice, whither I was bound by some trustworthy advice; but as it suggested that a reply should be sent care of a friend, instead of to Mr. Wyld's studio, I scented a doubtful allegiance to the "respectability" which my noble patron had once told me was my "god," and never replied to it.

There was no time to maunder in the French capital. The children fed and slept for a while, then we started at eight, or somewhat later, in the "special" for Nice.

Had I the evil eye, I wondered? Instead of that train running its usual placid course, it was snowed up for four mortal hours near Lyons. I had chartered four places for myself, the nurse Mary Ann, and three children—the youngest boy a babe, still, of nine months. The other four places had been taken by a young couple bound for Hyères. They hated children, therefore their journey with the tired, wailing babies must have been, if possible, a worse purgatory than it was to me. We finally arrived at Marseilles hours after we were due there, and I collapsed in a hotel, where good Mary Ann and an English-speaking waiter ministered to me so well I was able to continue the journey next day.

The first experience of the vine and olive-clad hills which beautify the railway journey from Marseilles to Nice thrills a poor plain-dweller with the ecstasy of admiration which is also felt at the hitherto unknown sight of the mountains and lochs of bonny Scotland. That railway-journey—the blue Mediterranean under the azure sky at our right, the hills sloping down to orange and lemon groves on our left, groves of fragrant trees where the red-yellow fruit and the waxen blossoms cluster together among the rich, shining, dark green foliage—was worth any amount of the physical and mental suffering which, if patiently borne, seems to earn us glimpses of glorious earthly happiness.

The keynote of rapture had been struck; and when a keynote of any emotion is thus struck, my experience is that there are many notes of the same kind to follow. It was rapture to inhale the warm, balmy, aromatic air as we drove to our hotel in the Rue de France. It was

rapture to awaken next morning, in my blue-and-white chamber—arranged, painted, decorated to imitate a white-and-blue striped tent—such sunlight I had never before seen streaming in through window and open door between my room and the nursery, the babies playing joyously in a sunshine they had never known till now. Joy invigorates. That may be accepted as an axiom. We were all in the highest spirits as I drove out immediately after breakfast, questing patrons and friends.

The yellow mud was a foot deep; planks had been placed on supports for the hotel guests to walk across the aloe and palm-covered garden courtyard to their carriages. To walk anywhere was impossible. But what mattered the mud? Sub-tropical trees and shrubs alternated with rose-covered hedges as we drove from house to house. The warm perfumed air had a keen life in it. I was not astonished when Dr. Gurney, to whom, of course, sent by my merciful patron, I first went, confidently predicted a cure for my wretched wounds, external and internal, within a fortnight, without any other treatment whatsoever.

"Wounds must heal here—they cannot help it," he sagely said. (And he was right. In less than a fortnight I was once more sound and whole.)

That very first day I presented letters to Drs. Travis and Drummond, as well as to other residents, including Mr. and Mrs. Archdeckne, who, invariably wintering at Nice, had a suite of apartments furnished (regardless evidently of the heavy duty on foreign goods) with English furniture in thoroughly English style, albeit their hotel was the Frenchiest of all the French hostel-

ries. My final and, as it proved, most important visit that day was to the town house of the aged Captain Grindlay (of Grindlay and Company of Indian fame), who, living in a pretty house with his aged sister, Madame Imbert (the wife of a French musician half her age), occupied a villa on the hills during the hotter seasons.

Captain Grindlay's house was picturesque without and within—the quaint-shaped drawing-room a mixture of English, French, and Indian decoration and curios. The short, spare, grey-haired old Captain received me with a gallant, courteous sympathy which vividly recalled the old-world charm of my early friend, the aged Sir Thomas Lennard. Albeit in the eighties—only hearing by means of an ear-trumpet—he and his kind, gracious old sister, stone-deaf though she was without question of ear-trumpets or any assistance to detect a sound—were full of life and energy, brimming over with active interest in all and everything.

My enterprise—to make my six months a professional success—was warmly discussed, for in some mysterious way Mme. Imbert understood her chivalrous old brother, I presume by watching the movement of his lips. Then the Captain, telling me in his earnest, emphatic way—he spoke in a loud, deep voice and with great distinctness, as if deafness were every one's normal state—that he would be honoured and gratified in the extreme if I would regard him as my grandfather as long as I wanted a chaperon and guide, told me how he would charge himself with my affairs and carry them through.

He inquired into which of my letters of introduction

I had delivered, and told me that Dr. Travis, his friend and medical adviser, had told him of my visit, and had suggested that when I came to him he should advise me.

Captain Grindlay was called "the Father of Nice." He knew the Nizza of its Italian past as well as the French Nice since its annexation. Yet, like all who really know something or anything well, he spoke humbly. "You see, you are quite a new-comer, and I have been here so long, and am naturally acquainted with the people themselves and the visitors and their ways," he added, after generously offering to take me everywhere in his carriage, and to introduce me to any one who might be useful—an offer I gratefully accepted. Then he went into the monetary question. I, of course, wanted to live comfortably, but at the least possible expense. A former valet and cook of his — one a German Swiss, the other a French Swiss, had started a private hotel at the back of Nice, near the railway station, called the "Pension Royale." If I cared to settle there, he would see his old servant Klüver and make special terms. I was grateful. The terms he suggested were half those I should have paid at the Hôtel de France, which, after all, was in a narrow street.

Then the babies and nurse were had in and petted. Dear old Captain Grindlay, and his no less dear sister! They reminded me of two old birds, hovering about some fledglings in the most eager anxiety to minister to their wants!

In only a day or two I was settled with my babies in the Pension Royale, with many promises of attention (admirably fulfilled) on the part of its proprietor, a dark-eyed, dark-haired, pleasant-faced little man of

middle age. We had two rooms at the top of the large villa, with the run of the wide balcony, which roofed the lower stories. We had full board for myself, Mary Ann, and the children (their meals separately served in the nursery) for one hundred francs weekly.

Captain Grindlay kept his word. He introduced me here, there, and everywhere. He escorted me to interview the manager of the new "Casino," which did duty as a species of Kursaal on the Promenade des Anglais (burnt down some years later, and now forgotten), who arranged an exchange. If I played once for them, I was to have their concert-room for a concert of my own when I elected to give one. He also took me into the private office of the editor of the *Journal de Nice*, and chartered his sympathies, and to many other places important to any one pursuing a professional career.

The Pension Royale had a charming garden in front, with the usual aloes and tree ferns and pepper trees and roses, and the doors at the back opened upon an orchard of orange and lemon trees, the ripening fruit hanging among the rich, perfumed blossoms. From our balcony we saw the whole of the new white town of marble villas in gardens, with the deep blue sea and a wide expanse of equally blue sky beyond.

It was an earthly paradise, there was no doubt about that! In the Pension there were already, as permanent boarders, a somewhat grotesque young German, Dr. Güterbock, who was at Nice for threatened lung disease, and a clergyman and his wife—thoroughly English, in spite of their surname Schwabe. Mrs. Schwabe—soon my dear, kind friend

—was tall, stately, with a frank, interesting face, and with an earnest manner of thought, feeling, and speech, which recalled my dear, dead godmother. Her presence, her influence, her sympathy and advice, made the Pension a delightful home.

What peace! what happiness! Little wonder that I was well and swimming in active work, not only for the present, but in aid of the future when I should return to England, in a fortnight; and, may I never forget the fact, I owed this to my fellow-creatures—not only friends, but utter strangers!

The world is full of good Samaritans—full! full! In a few days only I was teaching several English pupils—the genial Dr. Drummond's sweet little wife, Miss Mackeson, Miss Jameson, and others. Very soon I was giving accompanying lessons to the American Baroness de Hoffman, in her villa on the Promenade des Anglais—a grand, dark, clever woman with an imperious presence, but a kind heart and large sympathies for art and artists—and I had seen and been engaged to teach her by no less distinguished an amateur, the favourite pupil of Thalberg, Mrs. Charlton.

Mrs. Charlton was the wife of Mr. Charlton, of Chilwell Hall, Nottingham, and the only sister of the late Mr. John Walter, of Bearwood, the sole daughter of the reigning and granddaughter of the Mr. Walter who invented *The Times*.

She lived at the "Villa Mossa"—a house in the old Italian "Nizza" style, brick and stone floors, church-like *salons*, and the rest. An Italian man-servant (in slippers) ushered me into an Italian drawing-room, all

grandeur and cold comfort. When Mrs. Charlton, fair, blooming, matronly, warmly gracious, came in, the sun seemed suddenly to shine in upon the coldly splendid room; England, or a little bit of it, was in this southern building far away.

When she played to me, I seemed to see Thalberg at the instrument, to hear his liquid tone, his graceful, easy flights about the keyboard, as if pianoforte playing were a natural gift, and not, as it really is in most cases, laboriously acquired by dint of much and continued strenuous effort. Mrs. Charlton had certainly passed the Rubicon between the student and the expert, and I told her so. But as she elected to have a guide and assistant in her practice, I went to aid her very frequently, and learnt, not only that she was, oddly enough, deeply and innately musical—giving readings of Beethoven which, if I had been of an envious disposition, I should certainly have envied her—but to conceive a deep affection for her as a woman.

Later came her fair, beautiful young daughters, the eldest of whom, marrying the painter, Mr. Bearne, has distinguished herself both in painting and literature; and the third, Dora—slender, winsome, golden-haired, fascinating Dora—an ideal Gretchen, who, having inherited her mother's gifts, and, in addition, such a voice that, had she possessed the health essential to *prime donne* and their most arduous career, would have ranked her with the vocal stars of any period, was something akin to a genius.

Towards Christmas I was so full of engagements in the teaching department that all I saw of Nice and its life was in my peregrinations to and from my pupils'

dwellings. I was to play at a soirée at the Archdecknes'—terms 800 francs—when once more "Saturn" asserted himself against me, as a learned astrologer who drew my horoscope prognosticated that he would invariably do—and I fell ill.

What was I to do? I wrote to the pianist, Carlo Andreoli, and asked him to replace me, to which request he returned an amiable and affirmative answer (when the concert was over, insisting upon my receiving the cheque, and taking no denial). I had just played at the Casino under the auspices of Captain Grindlay, who introduced me to Lady Combermere, Lady Lamb, and many others. It was a detestable check, and I felt it acutely; but Dr. Gurney, supported by good Mrs. Schwabe, demanded rest in bed, and in bed I spent my Christmas Day, in a sunlit room, with roses peeping in from the flower-boxes beyond the open windows, bearing my disappointment at not making the fourth at a dinner at Captain Grindlay's, the third at which *partie carrée* was my new friend, the widowed Mrs. Hope (of Deepdene, Dorking, I believe), as best I might. Gifts poured in — Niçois fruits, flowers, boxes of chocolate, oranges, even old cognac, and towards the evening dinner-hour a square tin box appeared. My kind pseudo-grandfather had insisted upon sending me some of each item of the Christmas repast I had not been able to attend.

I could not eat any of it then. But the kind thoughts, the written messages with pretty gifts from each of the three to whom I was to be the fourth, seemed to give me new faith and hope in the future.

Then my husband came for the holidays—a great

relief to good Mrs. Schwabe, who had not thought well of my state; and with the brief respite from teaching, and free walks and drives and excursions, I was soon well.

Then came a time of, to me, fearful and wonderful dissipation. I had already received invitations to balls, dances, musical soirées, but they were not, except those strictly relating to professional duty, within my scheme for "making a season." However, when Mrs. Schwabe told me it would establish me socially to be seen about with my husband, I began to visit.

Luncheons at various villas; soirées in the Nice fashion (where warm negus of French *sirops* and fearful compounds in sugary pastry were the refections handed round in trays); quartet meetings at the house of the chief musical amateur of Nice, a very Italian Niçois, Monsieur Gautier, whose choice collection of violins, violas, viols-d'amour, 'cellos, and the rest of the stringed instruments, I met again years after in the exhibition at the Albert Hall; a musical party, specially given by the Count de Cessoles in his château-like mansion, with its old-world drawing-room, where his distinguished daughter, in an exquisite Watteau-like costume, received and entertained her guests, making, in those surroundings, a fascinating picture; a dinner with the Archdecknes, and a soirée afterwards, where I gave a species of "recital"; dances at various houses; dances at the select club, the "Cercle"; and some balls given in hotel ballrooms—notably that of Mrs. Prodgers—were some of the items.

The balls given annually by Mrs. Prodgers at Nice are too well known to need description. But to me, a

worker from early youth, who had eschewed all but necessary recreation, that splendid ball in the newly decorated hall, where the shining floor and the many mirrors reflected and multiplied lights and flowers, where the beauty and wealth of Nice gyrated to the strains of the best available orchestra, was a revelation.

An expert had been chartered from Paris to arrange and lead the cotillion. I remember him well—a slim man with much-dressed hair, and with the absorption in the task before him, the abstraction from all else, which betrays the expert in earnest. I believe he had brought some new figures specially invented for the occasion. In any case, the cotillion that, to me, memorable night was a wonderful, ideal dance. Captain Jameson, the fair, somewhat burly brother of my charming pupil, had procured us the invitations, and pioneered me through the difficult measures, afterwards taking me to supper—served on tiny round tables, although that was only A.D. 1868—in the fine dining-room of the fashionable hotel.

This was the most frivolous of my many experiences. Let me recall my musical memories of that wonderful winter, which was more like an English summer, and a fine, dry one.

Carlo Andreoli, the younger brother of the well-known Guglielmo, had first visited Nice as companion and nurse to his brother, who was dying of consumption, and whose poor body rests in the sad cemetery—sad because it, like the cemeteries of Torquay and Bournemouth and Ventnor in our own moist and treacherously climated land, records the early exit from this strange world of so many "in the flower of their youth." After

Guglielmo's burial, the younger brother, doubtless fortified and encouraged by much sympathy, visited the town winter after winter as pianist and professor. He was not, as a musician, the refined artist whose exquisite playing rivalled that of Thalberg, as his elder brother was, but he loved music, and was its persistent and painstaking votary. That he had the liberal, friendly spirit which should animate all "of a trade" was successfully proved by many amiably fraternal kindnesses to me. Each musician visiting the town was escorted by him to the Pension Royale to pay his respects. At my concert, the final event of my Nice season, he not only acted as "conductor," but "turned over" for me.

It is almost refreshing, in this honeyed record of human, generous loving-kindness, to have a dash of lemon to counteract the possibly cloying catalogue of perpetual sweets.

"Jimmy Davison," as the musical Jupiter of the "Thunderer" was familiarly called, had sent me a pressing letter of introduction to the singer "Sophie Cruvelli," who then posed as the goddess of Nice—nothing less. She had married the Baron—afterwards the Vicomte—Vigier. I believe that the title which crowned her social life was of the most venerable. She was at that time a great lady, in spite of her theatrical display of magnificent, indeed dazzling, *toilettes* each day on the "Promenade"—costumes which not only vied with those of Madame Ratazzi, a rival queen, but, according to the majority of observers, routed that distinguished and intellectual lady's display of dress utterly and completely.

To the renowned *cantatrice* of many European triumphs, now enjoying the social delights of wealth and position, "Jimmy" sent me. "She will help you —she is bound to do anything for me," he wrote in his abrupt, eccentric handwriting.

But he was wrong! Madame Sophie was "not so bound," as the phrase runs in the Catholic Lenten Indult for fasters and abstainers.

No! When I drove along the winding road to the château on the hill, almost half-way between Nice and the then mere village of Villefranche, and sent in my card and Davison's letter, I was but grudgingly received.

After waiting awhile in a Moorish hall of the theatrical kind—nothing seemed lasting or solid in that villa—I was pompously and condescendingly escorted by a tall man-servant along an equally Mauresque corridor to a Mauresque boudoir, where the tall, bedizened "diva" received me with brusquerie. The husband, who acknowledged my entrance with the slightest possible inclination of the head, stood on the hearthrug regarding me malevolently through his monocle, stuck in his eye-socket Dundreary-fashion. He was quite short—a dark, compact little man who seemed a human bantam-cock—and, I should imagine, as silly, opinionated, and strutting a creature as his prototype.

Madame la Baronne talked with unveiled contempt. "She could not imagine why this Monsieur Davison had ventured to write to her. She remembered that he was some writer in some paper; but if every writer who had recorded her career, as in duty bound to his

journal, were to send people to her, she would hardly be able to exist for the overwhelming worry and trouble."

"Whatever induced you to come to Nice?" she asked me, in a manner which suggested that I had no right to do so. "Ill health? You look well enough. And the place is frightfully overrated. You will not get any stronger here! As for *doing* any business, there is nothing to be done! The only musical events of the season are my *concerts pour les pauvres*. And I do not think I shall give any this year. I feel tired of Nice! I shall go on to Rome, very probably. I am very sorry for you that you have come here. You have been misled! My advice to you is to *go home*. You look, to me, as if you had better have stayed there."

I speedily beat a retreat, and felt truly thankful that Davison's kind thought had occurred after I had myself tested the possibilities of Nice, not before.

But I never told generous-hearted old "J. W. D." of the fiasco of his recommendation. I already knew that it was he, in his wholesale, thorough admiration for the rough German peasant lass "Sophie Kruwel," whose grand voice had launched her as a prima donna in England, who had literally "made" her by his encouraging articles. Without his support her crass musical ignorance, when she first appeared, might have quashed her in the fastidious suffrages of opera-goers who were accustomed to the high art of such exalted musicians as Mario, Grisi, Jenny Lind, and their equally great forerunners. And it was thus she treated the very first person he had ever sent to ask, not her

help, but her countenance! As I drove back to Nice, something within me whispered, "Those two suspect 'blackmail'!" That whisper enraged me, not only for myself, but for the great writer whose soul was so proud that it could not even conceive so base an ingratitude as that of the German peasant girl whose ladder he had been to climb to a French peerage.

To pass to pleasanter records. At the somewhat eccentric, kindly M. Gautier's quartet meetings we met many distinguished musicians, both professional and amateur. I think it was after the holidays, when my husband had to return to London to resume his teaching, that I made the acquaintance of the great violinist Sivori.

I had heard my mother rave about Paganini's only pupil—but so many years before, that when I heard that Sivori was expected, I thought to meet a perfect Rip van Winkle.

I was astonished, therefore, that almost dreaded evening at M. Gautier's—where I had promised to be the pianist each other week, Andreoli being at the piano on alternate meetings—to be introduced to a tiny man, not by any means old-looking, whose brilliant dark eyes had still the fire of youth, whose hair was neither scant nor grey.

No one meeting Sivori would have guessed him to be the Sivori of wide-world celebrity. He was shy to shame-facedness. When we talked, he wriggled, fidgeted, and half-giggled, like some silly schoolboy. But when he took his violin from its case with a tender reverence which I watched in admiration—when he drew his bow across the strings and his instrument

sang out as if it were a living thing with a living human voice—then he seemed to forget all but that Music was there, and he was worshipping her. . . . His eyes were abstracted, filmy. His expression was Sphinx-like. He was another creature.

Meanwhile he, like everything human, could err. That first evening at the Gautier quartet meeting, when we were all wound up with pleasurable anticipation—Andreoli was to play the great B flat major trio of Beethoven, a composition which, in chamber music, is parallel to Beethoven's "Emperor Concerto" in the orchestral—Andreoli, for some reason or another "off colour," began the first movement in B major. For a page or too Sivori and the clever amateur 'cellist followed. Only when some passage occurred which was a betrayal of the mistake did Sivori stop short, and laugh.

From that evening, for the remainder of his visit to Nice—a holiday he was enjoying before leaving Europe for a farewell tour in America—Sivori seemed suddenly to appear wherever I went. We became good companions. He seemed to like telling me stories of his life—very simple stories, for he was plain-spoken, easily amused, and did not "romance" in his broken English. Then came the evil day of his departure. The "mistral" was blowing. He called, accompanied by his compatriot Andreoli, muffled up in a huge overcoat and woollen scarf. He was in the lowest possible spirits. He shook my hand again and again, holding it gingerly in his delicate fingers; but he seemed unable to speak. Then the tears rose to his eyes and overflowed. "He hates saying good-bye," said

Andreoli, hurrying him away. We never met again.

Another interesting personality, with a certain resemblance to that of Sivori, albeit one was an Italian, the other an Englishman, and one served literature while the other was a child of music alone, was the brilliant, clever journalist whose friends affectionately called him "Jeff Prowse." Mr. Geoffrey (or Jeffrey) Prowse held a conspicuous position on the *Daily Telegraph*. The humorous sporting *brochures* which were, in *Fun*, as alluring as Burnand's "Happy Thoughts" in *Punch*—supposedly written by a genial old rascal who signed himself "Nicholas," and who was always mendaciously promising his public instruction on games, etc., notably the old game of "knurr and spell," and never fulfilling—were in reality by "Jeff Prowse."

I think it was the well-known Mr. Joseph Bennett, now head of the musical Press, who sent us an introduction to Mr. Prowse. In any case, we had a pressing letter from "home," and one morning early in the New Year of 1869 we drove up to Cimiez—then only a picturesque Italian hamlet with a mere "pension" or two instead of magnificent modern hotels—a place indeed known but as a spot boasting a finely preserved Roman amphitheatre for the Riviera visitors to inspect. Mr. Prowse boarded at a somewhat mouldy-looking old Italian house, profusely decorated with frescoes without and within, where two English maiden ladies kept a modest boarding establishment, and seemed, as far as we could judge, to cherish "Jeff" like two elderly hens with one chick between them.

He had been ill, they told us when we were intro-

duced into a long, lofty, bare chamber, over whose walls painted vines with hanging grape clusters clambered about a painted trellis. They did not think he was well enough to leave his room, etc. However, "Jeff" settled the matter by appearing—a thin little being, with great brilliant eyes and a gentle but vivacious manner. He heard eagerly of English friends and acquaintances naturally known to my husband in his residence in the Jarrett-Davison *ménage*, and insisted upon our drinking some champagne, a proceeding which I fancy distressed the hen-ladies, for some reason or another. They had seated themselves at needlework in the sunshine at the other end of the big saloon, and I noticed whispering, with their decently lace-capped heads together, after "Jeff" had carried his point and champagne was produced. Then, as we sat over the "magnum," he talked, with such delicate wit, such a knowledge and appreciation of the subtleties of modern life at home and abroad, particularly in the Riviera, that I simply listened, astonished.

A day was fixed for him to lunch with us before my husband's departure. But he was not well enough to be allowed "down in Nice." It was later that he had luncheon with me at the Pension, and I drove him into the hills on the right hand of Nice (Cimiez lies on the left), where there was a famous market garden, whose proprietor professed to grow "bromine." Then I saw the journalist *par excellence*. His manner was "child-like and bland" as the "heathen Chinee's" as he listened deferentially and patiently to the ever-mounting boasts and *blague* of that unconscious garden man, who, very likely, never knew that he formed, with his

gaseous fooleries, the staple of "Jeff Prowse's" very next letter to the *Telegraph*.

Alas! only a year later, as I was walking down the Kentish Town Road, I saw a marble slab proudly displayed in a stonemason's yard—a slab bound for Nice—upon which was recorded the death of the delightful little literary genius, one of the most recent victims of the dragon tuberculosis—together with the fact that the memorial was erected by his sorrowing colleagues and friends.

My first literary "chum!" In the sorrow which is a reflection of the poignant grief with which I stared dismayed at that headstone, I will close the chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER that brief period of, to me, wild dissipation—balls, soirées, dinners, and the rest—which, I must confess, left me with an uneasy sensation of having tasted joys which did not properly belong to my lifework, I was truly consoled to find a considerable augmentation to the number of my pupils. I had determined that my fee for lessons should be strictly according to the ideas of the pupils. Therefore nearly every pupil paid a different price. When I was sent for by a popular young married lady, a Mrs. Hartmann, who wanted me to teach her little son "Freddie" at a nominal fee, I was so charmed with the lovely young mother and her most interesting offspring—a pale, overworked-looking little lad of some nine or ten years of age—that I accepted the office without demur, although I was four times weekly to risk the dangerous hour after sunset, forbidden strictly by all doctors whatsoever to all patients whatsoever.

On these days I had to be absent at the Pension dinner, and good Mr. Klüver served dinner to me on my return. (My dear Mrs. Schwabe had, after an attack of hæmorrhage, been ordered to San Remo, and the dinner with new frivolous people of different nationalities was depressing.) I felt misgiving as I crossed the

ditch-intersected marshes that lay between us and the Carabacel villa, the huge frogs croaking in the twilight. But I was immune for some weeks. One day—it was nearing the end of Lent—I found my little pupil (an earnest, obedient, painstaking little lad, not without feeling for art, though I suspected he was hard driven by his tutor) with his throat swathed, and hardly equal to the gentlest hour I could gently give.

Diphtheria was raging in Nice. Funerals were the order of the day. But I never suspected the scourge in Freddie Hartmann's case.

It may not have been. But a day or two after I was found delirious in bed. The epidemic had me. Dr. Gurney had me placed in a wing of the hotel and shut in—it had an outer door. So prevalent was the scourge that no nurses were available. I was literally imprisoned. The kind old Dr. Travis went to Dr. Gurney and offered to nurse me himself under his direction. What a marvellous concession! The noble offer touched me deeply, but I refused. Already the brave hotel proprietor had constituted himself my nurse, and guarded my prison like a gaoler. To be nursed by even one male creature was humiliation enough and to spare!

Fortunately these dangerous, violent diseases run their course with rapidity. In a few days I was removed into another larger room overlooking the garden, where I might see the ever-laughing babies, and our Mary Ann, bravely fighting hysterical emotion, going and coming.

Then I began to pick up my work again and actively arranged a concert, which, costing me little beyond printing and advertising, realised eighty pounds.

Only just in time was that concert given. Already the "best people," as the most moneyed or best-born are termed, had fled, startled by the epidemic. My chief pupils—notably the Baroness de Hoffman—were, as they called it, "going on to Rome." Still, my matinée boasted a very brilliant audience, most of them more or less intimate friends—notably Mrs. Charlton, who nursed my little Louis after he drooped on his chair, fast asleep.

Then pupils fell off—left Nice one by one—and I was impatient to return home and begin a London campaign. We started for England the first week in April under more promising conditions for comfort, for just before I left the sweet, benignant old lady, Mrs. Hope, had insisted upon presenting me with a *coupé-lit* for Paris, securing my acceptance by chartering the compartment herself at the "Gare"—a more than kindly action.

Before I quit Nice, after returning in spirit for a while, I must not forget the friend secured for me by Lubeck—Mrs. Evans.

One day, returning home after work, I found her card, and returning her visit at her hotel—the principal caravanserai on the Promenade, frequented by Parisian-Americans—met a charming young lady with a somewhat grave manner, a serious expression in her violet or hazel eyes, and wavy brown hair. There was a suspicion of the Quakeress in Mrs. Evans's personality, as there was, indeed, in her mind and soul—as far as my intercourse with her admitted me to those sanctuaries. She was kindly, elder-sisterly to me. She introduced me to several interesting acquaintances.

But if I am not mistaken she was not at Nice after Christmas — was probably among those who took flight to Rome after the outbreak of the diphtheria epidemic.

After a most agreeable journey in our *coupé-lit*—the only unpleasant incidents in which were the frequent, sudden, and violent appearances of what seemed to me a demon in the wall—the conductor of the train demanding our tickets and clipping the paper which ensured our retention of our travelling home *pro tem*, so often and so viciously that I was afraid there would not be a shred left to show the final authority in Paris—we arrived in the French capital, to find it swathed in a real smoky, malodorous fog. And it was the first week in April! I hardly believed the evidence of my senses! We travelled through, reaching London, to find it bright and breezy, the house (which, with its proprietor, had been cared for, together with their little laundry, a few streets distant, by "Bessy and Eliza") in good order, a friend of the laundresses established as house-servant, and the garden a mass of the loveliest double hyacinths.

I set to work vigorously to pick up old pupils and start with new. But, compared with a season at Nice, any season for a London resident musician is truly uphill work. Nevertheless we had not a bad season in 1869, nor in 1870, when my painter-boy, Arthur, was born. The holidays of 1869 we spent in Cornwall — Falmouth our head-quarters — but a visit across country, which included a couple of days at Tintagel, a poetic spot not then get-at-able by railway, is my most cherished memory.

There was an eerie beauty, then, about the scenery surrounding the craggy hill surmounted by the fragmentary ruin, King Arthur's castle, which gave a poet-making power to the lonely spot. The great waves, thundering in upon the cruel rocks, seemed as if they moaned and roared whole histories of tragedies in the past. The little graveyard perched on a height, with its wind-blown slate headstones clustering about the weather-beaten little church, told its silent tale of mournful fatalities attaching to many of the humble green mounds. . . . I attempted, with a burst of bravado very similar to that with which I essayed races under Leycester Lyne in the Gordon Square of my childhood eighteen years before, to climb, with my husband and little Louis, the mere sheepwalks leading to the ruin. But I had not gone far when I was seized with a strange nervous horror, which is impossible to describe—if I were not ashamed to call it a craven terror I would!—and was unequal to go either farther or backwards. How I crawled down, with shut eyes, I do not like to remember.

While the other two, husband and son, waved triumphantly from above the grazing sheep, white dots on the precipitous green hillside, I, like Hereward the Wake in the late Mr. Grist's poem, "sat apart and mused." And my musings were self-chidings and discontent, because during this Cornwall visit I had felt to the quick that I was not exercising the faculties given me at my birth. I was always conscious of an inward struggle, an inward wail, of something neglected—God alone knew what! But once more the small value, so to speak, in creation of mere music

came home to me—alone there listening to the ocean's clamour and thundering. It seemed to me as if whole armies of histories of bygone lives were there—in that thunder—and I realised the height, depth, and strength of life—life, and its meaning, as if the almost revelation sealed itself in my soul. And I! I! was a mere player and teacher of an art whioh appealed to one sense alone—the hearing. I knew that musicians claimed, that music merely used the sense of hearing as a means of speech to the mind and heart and soul of mankind. But that was hardly reasonable. Music could only appeal to minds and hearts and souls already primed to receive the noble impressions claimed for it by its votaries. A Beethoven concerto, symphony, or sonata would be but silly noise to the untutored savage, both the remnants of primitive races and the tramps and criminal population which are the crying disgrace of civilisation. Reason, indeed, tells us that before music can be music to any creature, that creature's mind must be prepared, like a well-tilled, well-manured field, to receive the seed. And then, what definite hope can we have that an art which appeals to imagination and emotion alone can have a good effect upon any human being?

Music exhilarates, rouses—yes, and may both soothe and console, even inspire with religious feeling. But, after all, it can penetrate no farther than mere *feeling*. And of what use is mere *feeling?* Feeling has damned many a soul. I should be glad, indeed, to have proofs that feeling has ever saved for eternity one single human spark.

This inward warring of soul-instincts had troubled me on occasion for years past.

Work was the one weapon with which I fought all my many spiritual enemies.

The year 1870 brought work in plenty (also the birth of another son, named "Arthur" in memory of my Cornwall impressions). 1871 and 1872 were active public-playing years—in 1872 I played Chopin's E minor Concerto at the first Crystal Palace Saturday Concert of the season. In those days, these concerts were still popular with London concert-goers—as were also the "Monday and Saturday Pops." Now, twentieth-century amateurs would hardly know what manner of musical recreation these things might have been!

In this year I had noticed a very fascinating old gentleman, in a black velvet coat, whose silvered hair belied his youthful, energetic movements, escorting a delicate-looking old lady, who was assiduously waited upon by two young ladies, evidently her daughters, in and about the Crescent, which was opposite our house and that of the Coppings, who lived two doors above us.

Skinner Prout was the successor in painting—notably water-colour—of his uncle, the celebrated Samuel Prout. I was delighted to be introduced to him, although he was hardly his usual bright self after the recent death of the beloved partner of a most eventful life. His conversation was not only brilliant, but so full of knowledge ripened by thought, that it was indeed an important event to be admitted to his intimate aquaintance, as I, to my great good fortune, was.

Seated by him on a bench in Leighton Crescent, which he liked "because there was such a grand sky-

view," I learnt to see nature with new eyes—or eyes newly awakened by a painter. We often watched the sunsets together—he speaking (and really, unconsciously, instructing) with a certain rapture—for nature's wealth of gorgeous colour seemed to inspire and almost intoxicate his artist's spirit. Then, his talk of scenery—scenery in the Antipodes, which he had visited, scenery in France, Italy, and in his beloved Cornwall—made me literally mourn that I had not known him before I had seen, half seen, as I now knew, much of Europe's physical beauty.

It was an ideal coterie, ours in Leighton Grove and Leighton Crescent. We met at each other's houses, evenings—mine was the only one of several which did not boast of a billiard-room with a small-sized table—and there was music, supper, billiards. Mr. Prout's grandchildren, the offspring of Edward Copping, the journalist, and Prout's daughter, Mrs. Copping, were already brilliant in different ways. Harold (at this day a painter and distinguished illustrator) delighted his grandfather by his masterly drawings, from life, of animals—dogs, horses, cattle—anything he could get at to sketch. Mr. Prout showed them to me with great pride. "He ought to go far," he said. I have often grieved that my dear old friend could not see his grandson's paintings on the Academy walls, as I, surviving, have seen them. A younger grandson, Arthur, has already proved that he guides the pen with as much power as his brother wields the brush. History repeats itself.

It was this summer, I think, that I, with my two elder children, paid a visit to Mrs. Charlton at Chilwell

Hall, the Charlton family estate, a fine old stone house in beautiful grounds.

The lovely Dora was enamoured with music, and many hours were spent by us going through operas. She had wonderful dramatic instinct, and the faculty of grasping character and plot which few singers possess by nature. But her voice, although of great compass, seemed to me to be as fragile, delicate, and unfit for wear and tear as some exquisite wild flower, which, if plucked, withers at the very touch of a coarse human hand.

At Chilwell Hall I met Mr. Arthur Walter, who had not then succeeded to the possession of the great *Times*, a slender, fair young man who spoke little. But that little was caustic and searching. Youth though he was, his wits were sharp, his intellect was steadily and strongly at work. There also came to stay Dr. Dasent of *The Times*, and, later, his clever son, "Geoffrey."

While we were at Chilwell, Mrs. Charlton took me to Newstead Abbey, where modern furniture had replaced the historic belongings of the great poet of the early nineteenth century, where the portrait of the then squire, surrounded by big game he had shot, whose skins covered the floor of the stony, crypt-like hall, occupied a conspicuous position on the great staircase, and where the only relics of the proud peer who was, strangely enough, one of England's greatest poets, consisted of his celebrated portrait by Phillips, hanging over the mantelpiece of the holland-swathed drawing-room: a few items, such as his cap or helmet and sword after the fatal episode in Greece, under

glass in an upper corridor, the historic skull set in silver, which was traditionally the loving-cup of his supposed orgies with his friends, and the furniture in his bed and dressing rooms, each different item bearing a small brass plate with the inscription: "This belonged to Lord Byron."

I spent some little time alone, in those queer, old-fashioned rooms, for Byron, more in his marvellous letters, recorded in Moore's life, than in his poesy, had fascinated me in the first decade of my life. I still believe that as a prose writer Byron, had he so elected, would have surpassed himself, would have cast his "poesy" into the shade. Mrs. Charlton and her daughters had started to sketch. I was quite alone, until an eerie sensation sent me flying out of doors, where the ghastly feeling of tracking the footsteps of the dead was not banished by visiting the solemn garden, where the hazy fishponds were the old stews fished by bygone monks, and where grinning stone satyrs covered with green mould occupied the pedestals at the end of grassy, yew-bordered walks—pedestals once, doubtless, occupied by the statues of saints.

Then, Boatswain's tombstone. Byron's tribute to his loved dog was touching enough. But what of the line, after a sneer at human friendship, where he says of friends—

I never had but one, and here he lies?

* * * * * *

It was about this time that, curiously enough, the well-known composer, Ferdinand Hiller, proved a stepping-stone towards the goal of my life—a literary career.

I met him first at the house of his pupil, Elizabeth Philp, and later at a private recital of his at the house of a friend at Kensington. Hearing I was a pupil of his old friend Adolph Henselt's, he made me play to him, then he played to me, and my appreciation of his great and ultra-classical talents led to an agreeable acquaintance, and to somewhat more—to an article on the subject of himself and his works which I sent in to the *Musical World*, and which was not only inserted in the place of honour, but led to the editor, J. W. Davison, asking to see me.

"Why, you girl, you, what are you thinking of, messing about all this time with music, when you were born with a pen in your hand?" he cried. "Eh? What d'ye mean by it? Don't be a fool, but just go home and write. Yes—write. What? Oh, it doesn't matter; anything, everything! And when you want to see yourself in print, send it on to Bill, here. I'll warrant it shall be printed!" (Bill was his brother William.)

I said that it was very rarely I had any musical experience to relate, and when he asked me what, then, I studied or read, I boldly confessed to being fascinated by metaphysics.

"I thought as much," he said. "It's a phase we all pass through while we are cutting our literary teeth. I did. So did a friend of mine, Simon. One day we were both reading Kant in the Museum. I went to him, after vainly trying to grasp something, and asked him to do it and tell me the result. After an hour he came to me. 'Can't make it out. You try again,' he said. I tried again. No good! Went to him. 'Have

another try, old fellow,' I said. 'Not me!' he said. 'If neither you nor I can understand it, I take it there's nothing to understand.' No, my child! metaphysics is a weedy pond, with treacherous holes in it. Remember that!"

I was hardly likely to forget one word of that momentous interview. I found myself at home—how I got there I could not have told. "After this, it will not be waste of time to write—and not only to write, but to meditate, to study," I told myself triumphantly. I felt as if I had obtained a special licence to prepare for some kind, however humble a sort, of a literary life.

Carefully I set aside a certain time each day. My new self-indulgence must not interfere with either my bread-winning or my home duties. Already I had found my habit of mapping out my time invaluable; indeed, the regulation of waking hours, jealously guarding even the minutes, had been of more use to me than study, experience, or any other of life's treasures. A book always accompanied me to and from, and between my engagements. Then, when the daily work at the children's wardrobes was over—for until my eldest son assumed manly garb, I had myself made every garment the children wore—I had time before sleeping to read, think, reason, and take notes.

I was beginning to hope that my bridge from music to literature was actually begun—whatever I sent in to the *Musical World* was immediately published by "Dishley Peters," as Davison called himself as its editor, were it musical, dramatic, or semi-philosophical—when I was suddenly and unexpectedly appointed to be pianoforte teacher at the first High School

for Girls in England, founded by Miss Frances Mary Buss.

With all my heart I had admired the school, its object, its head, and the public spirit with which the great woman who was the pioneer of a higher-class moral, mental, and physical education than it had hitherto fallen to the lot of young girls to receive, had sunk personal gains to further her noble scheme. Therefore I replied to Miss Buss's summons for an interview with alacrity, hardly dreaming that it would relate to congenial work which meant as well the nucleus of a yearly income. I was soon installed, teaching pianoforte classes as well as giving private tuition to each class pupil. Musical classwork was greatly to my taste. It admitted of a species of lecture, besides enabling the pupils to study great orchestral works arranged for eight performers on four pianofortes.

Strangely enough, this appointment, instead of retarding my longed-for literary career, actually facilitated it. For when Mr. Alfred E. T. Watson, then just appointed to the *Standard* as musical and dramatic critic, kindly came to review the first pupils' concert, he heard I was writing, and taking away an article I had intended for a musical paper, read it to his friend, Florence Marryat, and in a few days I received a note from her accepting it for the *London Society* magazine she edited, and enclosing a cheque for five guineas.

An operetta written conjointly by Mr. Watson and my husband (*The Elfin Tree*), for the opening of the theatre at the Alexandra Palace, led to my acquaintance with the clever musician, Henry Weist Hill

(conductor and director of the Alexandra Palace music), and later to his reconciliation with James Davison, and my journalistic quarrel with the late Sir Augustus Manns.

First Davison objected to my praise of Weist Hill, before he had himself judged of his conducting capacities. But after inserting these eulogistic articles (which he himself chose to sign "Flamingo") he went to hear the concerts, and ratified my opinion by himself reviewing them in an approving spirit in *The Times*.

James Davison still held his rank as perhaps the finest and most fastidious musical critic the world has known, as well as one of the strongest and most brilliant of writers. Backed by the imperial literary power, *The Times*, his word was law to the very last moment that his pen rested on the paper.

It was, perhaps, *The Times* approval which irritated Mr. Manns, head of the rival Palace Concerts, into writing angry letters to the *Musical World*. I, as the objectionable "Flamingo," had to reply; then there ensued one of those pretty little newspaper wars—other journals plunging in, some on one side, some on the other—which pleasantly affect the circulation of the journals concerned. The squabble was ended by a personal appeal to Davison from his old friend, Sir George Grove.

CHAPTER XVII

IT was towards the close of 1875 that an agreeable episode occurred in my life as a pianist. I spent two months with Lord and Lady Dudley at their then shooting lodge, Forest Lodge, Blackmount.

A most romantic spot! Nestling against a hill, wooded with Scotch firs, slim beeches, and the "rowan tree" beloved of poets, was a gabled stone house—under whose very rude stone walls lay the placid loch, Tullich by name, which, with its tiny wooded island reflected in its crystal water, was a Loch Lomond in miniature. Opposite frowned "the Blackmount"—a purpling mountain, mostly veiled, those cooler autumnal morns, with wreathing clouds. It was new to me, in my walks, to meet and pass through a cloud; also to watch the clouds massing, parting, first hiding, then revealing the bleak, undulating bogland, where one met only cattle droves, with shepherd, or dog, in attendance, these clouds hovering literally below one, instead of in their natural position, above! There, among other distinguished guests, I met Prince Christian—a kindly, courteous gentleman, who disliked any "royalty fuss," and who spent his days deer-stalking, and his evenings at the whist-table or listening to music, his royal spouse being a distin-

guished amateur given to the performance of the immortal Beethoven Sonatas. And here, one day, came Professor Blackie, seeking Lord Dudley's help in the foundation of a Greek chair in some university.

Luncheon was just at an end as Lord Dudley brought him in—a spare, erect, dignified old man, his silvery hair falling to the plaid which served him as a wrap that keen Highland autumn day. So to me fell the agreeable task of entertaining him, and being enlightened by his learned talk, which in itself was "a liberal education." His inner man reinforced, I accompanied him through the grounds to the gates, where the high road led past the one little inn to the wastes which stretched, treeless and houseless, for miles before the first railway station —Tyndrum—was a link with the civilised world, a good nine miles away.

I was then studying the ancient Greek philosophy, together with the old Greek dramatists and writers, and many a valuable hint did the great professor deign to give the feminine aspirant. His was, apart from his mental powers, a quaint and most interesting personality, with a curious, indescribable charm which lingers in the memory like the after-scent of an old-world perfume, or the haunting of a wild, sweet melody.

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My sons and daughters were now to be educated—a pressing and, as it proved, a "vexed question."

To send them to good schools, where the faith I hold, and in which they were already well grounded, was taught, was a costly undertaking. It had to be, by my

own will, my own. I had had to refuse presentations to public schools of importance offered to my husband for his boys by Sir Sydney Waterlow, which explains why I charged myself with the expense, for my life-partner did not in the least share my belief in the supremacy of the Old Faith.

I was making some hundreds by music-teaching. But just at that period the Musical College movement began—a movement to give good education in the art at a rate hitherto unheard of, and fears for a future reduction in my income were agreeably put to flight by my finding a market for my literary work.

I had already compiled a popular account of my philosophic studies, written in a form which would render them "understanded by the people," and in my leisure minutes had penned some short stories.

These came into print by an odd coincidence.

My husband and Mr. George R. Sims ("Dagonet" of the *Referee* newspaper) had written an operetta together, called *The Dress Rehearsal.* Mr. Sims was just then starting a weekly paper of fiction, etc. My husband showed him, unknown to me, one or two of my effusions, and one morning, when I was with the children at Brighton, I received the proofs of a manuscript whose existence, I thought, was only known to myself.

My stories "did" on the paper, and led to my placing others with some of the current weeklies and monthlies. Meanwhile, Mr. Trübner had accepted my "popular" philosophical book, called *The Story of Philosophy.* Published under the pen-name of "Aston Leigh," it was received as the work of a man, favour-

ably reviewed by dailies, weeklies, even by the quarterlies.

So successful a venture with a book set me thinking whether I might not republish my short stories in book form with advantage. Accordingly one day I went boldly to the well-known publishing house of Richard Bentley and Son, in New Burlington Street, and asked to see Mr. Bentley.

Mr. Bentley, I was informed, was out of town, but I could see his head clerk. I was taken into a charming, study-like office, furnished with handsome bookcases, bronzes, office table, and old carved chairs—a room I grew to love, later, with a peculiar love as deep and tender as that I felt in retrospect for the rooms in Aveley Cottage—and a stout, short man, with a strong suggestion of the British bulldog about him, came to me.

This was a Mr. Van Homrigh, the head subordinate, whom Mr. George Bentley often termed "my faithful Van." If I remember rightly, Mr. Bentley replied to my question, once, as to his being a descendant of the Esther van Homrigh of Dean Swift celebrity in the affirmative.

Mr. Van Homrigh, florid, determined, perched himself in the chair of his venerated chief—where his short legs barely reached the ground—and with a solemn, subversive stare, heard what I had to say, glanced somewhat askance at the printed extracts in the big notebook I handed him, made a somewhat slighting remark anent the republication of short stories which had already "run" in weeklies; but, unbending slightly (frowning immediately after, to repress any too gushing

aspirations on my part), proposed to send them to "one of their readers—after which, he would let me know the result."

A fortnight had barely elapsed, when I received a letter from him. The firm maintained their opinion *in re* the republication of short stories. But if I would send in a short story, not before published, the editor of *Temple Bar* would accord it his most careful attention.

I had just completed a short story—not as short as the "short stories" of this day of abridgment and condensation—which I had called "The King of the Snakes." It was fantastic—the outcome of an idea which had flashed upon me in one of my most idealistic and unreal moods. I sent this to the editor of *Temple Bar,* and tried to put the transaction out of my mind. That was easy to do. I had more work on my hands than I could do justice to—yet strove to do full justice to every detail.

Three weeks passed. Then I thought it behoved me to inquire the fate of my MS.

I called in New Burlington Street. Mr. Van Homrigh, at his desk in the outer office, did his best to act the part of a personage who had never seen me, or any one approaching to any likeness to me before, but, "accommodating me with a chair" just within the outer counter which was the fortress raised to defend the publisher from the would-be authors of the public, retired within. A few minutes later I heard a footstep, and glancing nervously upwards, saw the beautiful face of a silvery-haired, dark-eyed man looking gently down upon me.

"You are Mrs. Diehl," he as gently said. "I am so

sorry I cannot see you just now; but your story is, I assure you, having all attention, and you shall hear from me as soon as possible"! Then he shook hands with me, made some ordinary remark, and himself opened the swing-door for me, giving me a charming bow and encouraging smile as I glanced back.

If only human beings could realise what a courteous sympathy, such as that Mr. George Bentley accorded to all he came in contact with, effected in strengthening each unit to do his utmost, to do his best, in fact to *hope*—largely and intensely—more persons who depend upon others for the material by which they manufacture, and earn capital by manufacturing, would accord it far more freely than they ordinarily do!

Once more a period of time, whether it was a week or a fortnight I cannot remember, elapsed, when I received a letter from Mr. George Bentley asking me to call upon him.

He received me in that historic room as if I had been a young friend who had claimed his special interest for years. He said that if, after consideration, I should like my story to appear in *Temple Bar,* it should do so. Meanwhile it would need so much close work on my part to prune here and enlarge there, that if I took his advice I should withdraw the offer of the MS.

"I will tell you this much about yourself as a writer," he said. "It is not only my opinion, but that of my literary advisers also. You are a long-story writer. You want a big canvas and plenty of room. If you would care to write me a novel now! Have you any idea of a subject?"

Had I not! With that gentle, courteous, silver-

haired Gentleman seated there—I write the word with a capital letter, for above and beyond all things Mr. George Bentley was the truest of true knights termed "Gentleman" in these latter days—I spoke more freely than I had ever spoken to any one in my life before. I told him my passionate desire to write from my very cradle—my musical life, all; and when we parted it was with an understanding that I should immediately write him a novel with a musical girl as its heroine. (I proposed a singer, and he acquiesced.)

The very next morning I was early at my "desk"—my desk was the big table in the dining-room, but that is a mere detail—and began *The Garden of Eden*. I had not abated my ordinary teaching work, so that I could give but a few morning hours a few days each week to the novel. Some weeks elapsed before, as I had agreed with Mr. Bentley, I sent in the first volume to be "read."

When I received a note from Mr. Bentley asking me to call, I proceeded to New Burlington Street considerably strung up, fortifying myself, preparing myself for hearing my new "bantling" condemned. When that royal chief of all kindly publishers, past, present, and to come, met me half-way with words of greeting and one of his rarely beautiful smiles, and with his sympathetic nature divining my suspense, said, "Sit ye down, dear Mrs. Diehl, and hear my reader's very favourable report of your novel," the room swam round and round—only my intense fear of betraying my physical weakness saved me from one of my attacks of faintness.

I can see the dear man now, reading the kindly

praise of his reader in a voice of approval and satisfaction—a report which I remember ended with these words: "*If the second and third volumes are at all equal to the first, I strongly advise you to publish it.*"

I went home invigorated, and, working at every stray moment without abating, but rather intensifying, my teaching efforts, completed the MS. by the late autumn, when I sent in the second and third volumes with the renewed resolve to endure their depreciation if that was to be their fate.

A note, a few weeks later, from Mr. Bentley, heartened me.

"The book will *do*," he wrote, and said he would call on me, if convenient, at a certain day and hour to discuss arrangements.

I remember the ungenial day when he drove up in a "four-wheeler," muffled up—for his physical handicap was cardiac asthma—and visited me in friendly fashion for the first time. He was, in his kindness of heart, gratified that his reader's opinion justified him in offering me either a hundred pounds at once or three instalments of fifty pounds—fifty on signing the agreement, fifty at the sale of five hundred, and fifty when seven hundred and fifty copies were disposed of. I thought this offer too speculative on his part, and frankly said so.

"What if the book has no success?" I blankly asked. He had been so kind, I could not bear the idea of his losing by me.

He smiled reassuringly. "The success is in the book itself," he soothingly said. "You see, there is a touch of genius in it."

I have never forgotten those words. I have stored them up, to comfort me in the agonies preceding death. I hope most people do this—make a little hoard of earthly consolations to bring out in times of such spiritual depression that everything seems nothing, that their life seems a trifle endured in vain, that all is blank, dead hopelessness.

I accepted the second proposition after that speech; and that Mr. Bentley's opinion was unerring was proved that the three-volume edition of the *Garden of Eden* brought me one hundred and fifty pounds.

It also brought universal approbation from the reviewers. I remember being nearly annihilated by opening the *Daily Telegraph* one morning and reading that there was "genius, power, passion, and pathos" in the book, and that the "brilliant author" need not be anonymous.

The "success" was evidently in "the book itself." Other newspapers panegyricked. Even the dreaded *Saturday Review* was kind.

But as soon as my next novel, *Eve Lester*, was published a few months later under my own name (by the wish of my husband), I nearly, for some mysterious reason or other, lost all the private friends who were not public celebrities, and most of my private pupils as well.

Indeed, I suddenly found I had enemies. People, failing to discover adverse reviews in print, sent me private letters from their friends, "connoisseurs, whose opinion they had asked" (signature and address carefully cut out), condemning me and my "attempts" in wholesale fashion. The tenor of the advice my acquaintances tendered me could be summed up in the old sentence, "Cobbler, stick to thy last."

My remedy was self-made. I shut myself up. I was never "at home," and I never paid visits.

Eve Lester was followed a few months later by *The Knave of Hearts*. I was also writing short serials, sketches, and stories for different papers and magazines (many now, alas! defunct and forgotten), and my *Silesian Love Story* was accepted by Mr. Bentley for *Temple Bar*. But seven children's boarding-school bills—notably the boys', four of whom were educating at the well-known old Elizabethan mansion, Baylis House, Slough—demanded still more strenuous efforts on my part.

I had heard that good terms were paid for the stories lately lifted into greater popularity than ever by the successful tale *The House on the Marsh*. So one day I called at the curious little house with the bow-window in the Strand, one of the few remaining old-fashioned business houses, now in its turn demolished, and boldly sent up my name, with the addition which had never failed to procure me an interview with publishers or editors, "author of *The Garden of Eden*," and was at once conducted to "Mr. William Stevens." Climbing a dark, narrow staircase after the polite, curly-haired assistant, and crossing an equally dark landing, I was ushered into a quaint, oddly shaped little office, which seemed a mere passage-room between the front and back of the narrow house.

There were shelves filled with books, and a sort of cross between a desk and an office-table, at which was seated an extremely good-looking young man, who rose and bowed me to a chair with that curious searching stare of mingled apprehension and defiance which

I have met with so frequently when first confronting any man with whom it is my weary lot to "do business," that I should feel quite "upset in my calculations," as the saying is, if it were missing.

The first alarm at my invasion over, Mr. Stevens proved a most agreeable interlocutor. I alluded to my recent work, and stated my errand—to ask whether he was inclined to buy a novel suitable for the *House on the Marsh* series.

"I know your work well," he said. (I have always heard that from every new publisher. Is it a stock phrase?) "In fact, I have just been reading *The Knave of Hearts*—the sort of work which is more suitable to our kind of publications than, for instance, your *Garden of Eden*." He then gave a very comprehensive but succinct account of what they really wanted, adding, however, that before we could proceed farther in the matter he must ask me to state what sum I expected to make by each novel.

I did not wish to see that look of armed-and-warned antagonist again in an intensified form, so I meekly said, "Two hundred and fifty pounds."

"Oh!" he said. "We will willingly give you that for the serial rights of all your novels; and when you do not wish to use them in the three-volume form" (library novels invariably appeared, then, first in three volumes, or, in rare instances, two), "there would be fifty pounds for the right of publication in our 'Family Storyteller.'" (The series which contained *The House on the Marsh*.)

I went home feeling as if my mind were turning into a fiery "Family Storyteller," whirling out novel after

novel like so many sparks. So many plots and such a multitude of characters came flashing out pell-mell, that in desperation I seized upon the first I could catch, and held it tight till it was complete in my mind, ready to be written down at "post haste," without the slighest difficulty; and this happened during the brief transit in a swift hansom from the Strand to Regent's Park Terrace.

Many doubtless know this electric eruption of the mind. It tries the *physique* cruelly afterwards. Still, it has its advantages. One need never subsequently "bother" about the work. It is not alone born, but full-fledged. The after-writing is like copying a picture which is visible to oneself alone.

A Woman's Lovestory was the first novel I sold to Messrs. Stevens. The second was *Griselda* (afterwards published in three volumes by Mr. F. V. White —Mr. Bentley preferred MSS. which had not been used in serial form). Then came *The Hollwood Mystery*, *Dead or Alive*, and a MS. built upon my favourite semi-supernatural plot, *The King of the Snakes*, which, fearing offence to his special readers of all kinds in the English-speaking world, Mr. Stevens asked me to exchange for another—a request I could not comply with at the time, for every hour had its monetary value—the education of the Seven was like a hungry wolf howling at the door of my laden soul. . . .

Savings had been flung to that clamourer. Then small sops—library work, short stories, cheques for lessons, schoolwork. . . . The twelve hundred I received from Messrs. Stevens in twelve months paid back debts and gave me a surplus to draw upon. The

surplus went to the wolf. Then more work. I had published several other novels, not only with Messrs. Bentley, but Messrs. Hurst and Blackett, and Ward and Downey, besides writing all kinds of articles on all sorts of subjects for various papers.

In the overpowering first flush of novel-writing in the early eighties, I resigned my position at the North London Collegiate School. My health had already given way; I could no longer work, with justice to my work, sixteen hours out of twenty-four. I began to realise that I was mortal. Meanwhile, I had had more most eventful and interesting introductions to, and social intercourse with, more distinguished persons.

Far back in the Gordon Square days, I had met some charming girls, the Misses Biggs—one of whom, who afterwards died, a "rare, pale Margaret," was the bosom friend of the sister Etta of mine who died at twenty years old, in the Mauritius. Another, the brilliant young Helen, married the then millionaire, Mr. Thomas Taylor. She had sought me out to teach her young daughters in their beautiful house in Hyde Park Gardens; and, later, I twice stayed with her at Mr. Taylor's equally beautiful estate—Aston Rowant, in Oxfordshire.

Mr. Taylor was not only a picture buyer and "fancier," but a connoisseur. In his gallery at Aston Rowant—the fine old stone house with the spreading park, the lake, and the picturesque gardens and shrubberies—hung, in a place of honour, the great canvas which made its painter famous, "The Casuals." This (unless my memory plays me very false) Mr. Taylor had secured "off the easel," before exhibition,

together with many *chefs d'œuvre* which were afterwards reckoned among "the pictures of the year," by other celebrated artists. But not only did paintings by British artists hang on his walls and throng his gallery, but under his hospitable roof one gazed with delight at some of the rarest, finest work of foreign artists. A rare collection, indeed, was that of that kindly man, whose credulity in speculation which others cajoled him to embark upon led, later, to its dispersal!

Mrs. Taylor, the beautiful Helen I had admired as a child, was—is still, fortunately—one of those rare women whose acquaintance is indeed a lifelong boon. While a great worker in all public movements which tend towards the protection and aid of women, especially the injured and oppressed, she was a queen of hostesses and housewives. In her house everything was exactly as it should be; it was like some fine, well-manned ship, under an exceptional captain. In town, a reception of hers differed from others, because there seemed a friendliness among its heterogeneous elements which is usually lacking in these gatherings together of widely varying personalities. In her country home she was a typical Lady Bountiful, and an unselfish entertainer of her guests whose brilliant brain planned that which was suggested by her warm heart for their happiness and enjoyment under her roof.

Here I spent part of a week with the Mr. Marcus Stone I had seen, then a mere lad, at Mrs. Sargood's evenings, and with his dainty, dark-haired, pretty wife. With the Stones, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor made a delightful

excursion to Thame, also to the quaint old town-village of Dorchester. We went in the "canoe," as the boat-shaped waggonette was called, and both coming and going were very lively. Tea at old inns, wanderings beforehand to see either remains of old camps, Saxon and Roman, or the spot where, between meadows, the "Thame" joining the "Isis" begins its life as the great Thames—I remember them all with a grateful tenderness, wishing that it might be in my power—if only once!—to give to others something akin to one of the many delights others have given to me. . . . All admirers of Marcus Stone's lovely ideas of life-incidents sealed upon his canvases will like to hear what he said when there was a discussion on beauty and ugliness in human beings.

It was while we were at tea in homely fashion, in the parlour of the quaint old inn at Dorchester. The question of noses and nose-machines was on the *tapis*. He strongly deprecated all interference with the face born with us. "Nature knows better than we do," he said. "Alter, for instance, some feature which in itself is below any standard of beauty—such as a thick-tipped nose on certain faces—and the general result is ugliness, however beautiful the altered feature may be."

This opinion of his, which literally means that Nature knows better what makes for perfection than her children do—I have also heard from several other artists, painters, and sculptors. My cousin, Paul Weber, landscape-painter to the Court of Bavaria (his mother was a Mangold), spoke bitterly at the time of the recently started habit of lightening the hair with gold dye. "Women look ghastly nightmares who do it,"

he said, and evidently felt. "Nature matches the hair best, to suit the tint of the skin."

Another painter who was a co-guest with me at Aston Rowant was the ageing Mr. Webster—a dear old man, cherished by a dear old wife—one of those apple-faced, blue-eyed, white-haired old people who seem like simple children grown old "unspotted from the world." His pictures "The Smile" and "The Frown" —benches of schoolboys variously elated or depressed by the praise or blame of the master—hung on the walls of the artistic drawing-room at Aston Rowant. Mr. and Mrs. Webster were a typical Darby and Joan. Living in an obscure Kentish village, their interests were bucolic and natural. If I remember rightly, in their rural homestead they kept pigs and chickens, and the orchard and the kitchen garden were the only rivals of the animal world about them.

These were "painter folk." But during the eighties I gained as a friend, without any previous acquaintance, an artist in another branch of executancy—the greatest actor of the latter half of the nineteenth century—Henry Irving.

As my first essay on play-reviewing—an unsigned article upon the then "Mr." Burnand's comedy, *The Turn of the Tide*—had led to a letter of thanks from him to my first editor, Mr. J. W. Davison (for whom I still wrote), saying "*For this I owe you poëmata*" (for the *Musical World*), Mr. Davison gave me a free hand in occasional dramatic criticisms afterwards. An article on the revival of *The Bells* — not by any means a panegyric, but a simple statement of my impressions of the great actor's meaning in his most philosophical

and thoughtful rendering of the arduous part of "Mathias"—elicited a letter to Davison from him also.

"He thought *I* had written it," said "Jimmy" to me, with one of his fits of laughter. "Lord! I wrote and told him it was a *female*." As usual, he seemed hugely amused. I know that to him I was a "big joke" —as, indeed, I seem to have been to many other people. Well, one must be *something*—better a jest in the eyes of one's fellows than a scourge!

The American dramatic and musical papers invariably pirated my articles. But in the case of that *Bells* article, they gave me the place of honour in the "leaders" on the front pages with such unanimity that, hearing that Irving contemplated an American tour, I sent them to him with a little note.

As soon as might be came a letter of thanks, expressing the desire for an interview in which he might thank me personally, if I would name any disengaged day and hour.

My "lord and master" demurred. "*I* don't want to know the man," he said. However, Irving called. I had been curious to know how he would look and be and speak in private life. When he came into the drawing-room—the quiet, languid gentleman, who looked "in his habit as he lived" like all the German professors I had met thrown into one, as in the case of a "composite photograph"—I was both surprised and amused, and my reverence for his histrionic genius mounted by leaps and bounds. That this tranquil, ordinary-seeming gentleman could change himself into "Dubosc" in the *Lyons Mail*, and "Mathias," in *The*

Bells, could be explained alone by his possession of a supreme power to which nothing is impossible.

I fancy I can see him now as he subsided into a low arm-chair opposite the fire—I sitting near the hearth on his right hand—and talked with me, languidly, like one staggering under an overpowering burden, to whom the slightest extra exertion threatens to prove the final straw which breaks the bearer's back!

This was until I spoke of my youthful experiences of Charles Kean's management at the Princess's Theatre in the early fifties. I had seen, had watched intensely, each Shakespearian revival as it was produced. I had seen Richard the Second howled at by as fine a stage crowd as even the Saxe-Meiningen company could produce a score and more of years afterwards, in a London street scene, which, if rivalled, has certainly never since been surpassed on any British stage. I had seen the vision of lovely childhood, Ellen Terry, rush on, and declaiming, as Puck, how she would "put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," vanish as if shot from a bow, her sweet, shrill child's treble crying, "*See-e* how I go!" I had seen Mrs. Charles Kean—that portly, grandmother-like being—dying as the divorced Queen Catherine, dying while realistic, but very beautiful feminine angels hovered over her with sweet smiles of encouragement. I had seen the exquisite Carlotta Leclercq, with the wealth of golden hair which was only one item in her general physical loveliness, masquerade as the Dauphin in *Louis the Eleventh*. I had watched Widdicomb as Bottom, and the handsome Misses Heath and Bufton as, respectively, Hermia and Helena in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I had

seen Macready, Phelps, and their contemporaries, and had followed Fechter through his brief career. There was only one thing I did not relate to Irving among my hordes of recollections: how, in a stage-box given us by my ordinary doctor, Mr. Balderson, an odd, crooked-faced little man, who was interested in my precocity and who was also doctor to the Princess's Theatre, I was watching with intensest interest the progress of the *Corsican Brothers*, in which Kean performed the dual part of Louis and Fabian dei Franchi, and either Miss Heath or Miss Bufton played the Emilie who is the woman who causes the mischief, when my evident stare of violent hatred at Walter Lacy, as the villain Chateau-Renaud wiping his sanguinary sword after slaying the good Louis in the forest duel, brought him wandering to the O.P. corner of the stage to murmur "All right, little one," with the most roguish wink I have ever imagined.

With this suppression, my reminiscences evidently interested the great actor. He sat on, interrupting gently now and then with a question, in an attitude I frequently noticed afterwards—his hands folded between the knees of his long, crossed legs. When I had no more to tell—actually a couple of hours had flown in this fashion—he stuck his eyeglasses in his eyes, and looking at me with a quaint smile, said, "Upon my word, you are a born actress!"

I felt somewhat taken aback, fearing he thought me ungenuine. I suppose I looked dismayed, for he added, "I mean an actress in ordinary life, of course."

"Then if I am, so are you!" I cried. "For you are not in the least like Irving on the stage!"

He laughed more heartily than I ever heard him laugh, although now and again I have seemed to amuse him.

"Well, anyhow, I hope for the future we shall be friends!" he genially said.

I may say we have been, and for more than twenty years—until his death. More, he honoured me with speaking his thoughts and feelings with a confidence which honoured me to an extent only those who love being trusted by their fellow-creatures can understand.

To me he seemed possessed of a huge, if peculiar, mind, like some vast cave, in which his musings were, in the dimness, difficult even for himself to rightly distinguish and classify.

Externally an actor, within himself he loathed all that was false—he would ever be true to himself at the risk of lifelong penalties of every kind. Thus he told me he professed no particular belief. He had none, had never truthfully arrived at any clear faith in any religion except that taught to each good heart by all that is best in the human soul.

"Sometimes," he said to me, once, "when I have been in some vast cathedral, I have felt an indescribable sense of the great glory that is, but it came and fled as swiftly as a phantom. When I eagerly seized it, my hands grasped empty air again!"

It seemed to me as if several distinct, yet different natures went to form that great personality which proved its greatness by its influence over all, individuals and crowds alike, with whom it came in contact. But chief, I should say, among these was an

internal spirit, which Irving chained, which only manifested its existence at stray moments, when its master chose to let its stifled growl be heard.

"Sir, give me a good hater!" quoth the much-quoted Dr. Johnson. He would have approved of Irving. The great actor was a good hater, but never without justice! Only that innate truth paramount in his soul forbade the weakness of going back upon his convictions. The wonderful insight into human character, born with him—that exceptional gift which in other circumstances would have made him a diplomatist, moving kings and countries with the ease with which the learned expert plays his chessmen, but which with his restricted antecedents was limited to histrionic embodiments of imaginary personages on the common stage—forbade his acknowledgment that the leopard could change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin, i.e. that the egoist who ruins fellow-creatures as a holocaust to the idol self can ever be a decent member of society, or that the blackguard can ever act honestly by himself or any one else.

When Irving in "cold blood" made a decision, that decision was unalterable.

When Irving was outraged, injured, he did not wish any ill to the offender, but he turned away, till the end of time, from that individual and his deeds.

Meanwhile he loved his chosen friends as only the greatest men love those who appreciate them, who believe in them, who are their faithful henchmen and followers. No one, indeed, who cannot hate can love, for hate and love are the halves of a whole.

I could give whole pages of conversation which

would support the above, but all confidences are sacred, those of the dead supremely so. I can only say that my reverence for the soul and mind and heart of the sublimely patient being who was known to the world as Henry Irving was enhanced by every word I heard from his lips during the three-and-twenty years of our acquaintance.

Whenever a new impersonation of his was to be seen, I made a study of it, and, as I had promised, afterward sent him my impressions. Of all his great creations, I, as a Catholic who had intimately studied the life of S. Thomas of Canterbury, was most struck with that of "Becket." I was, indeed, astounded, amazed, as I followed the wonderful outward signs given by Irving of that inner life of the unsuspected saint which he seemed to have assimilated by special inspiration. Returning to Dulwich, where I was staying with relations to visit the Lyceum (I then lived in the country), I sat up and wrote my impressions. Almost by return of post, but after the dailies had recorded their opinions, I received a letter from him containing a pregnant sentence:—

"*You are the only one who has seen my meaning.*"

Very shortly afterwards he sent me one of the artistic Cameron photographs of himself as "Becket"—large, framed, with a charming inscription. At our next meeting I was interested to know the details of this genius-prompted creation of his, and found that the minutest study could not have produced his conception of the martyr. It must, as other of his finest character readings, have been the outcome of one of those innate processes in the soul which are not understood,

perhaps, as well now as in those early days when man first began to ask himself what he was, why he was, and to what end he had been invented to suffer the ills that flesh is heir to.

I am the fortunate possessor of many delightful letters from the great histrionic genius, and was always cheered that he addressed me as "his dear Friend," and signed himself "Yours ever." One relic of our friendship I treasure greatly.

During a talk on superstition, on the superstitions of the stage in particular—the "black cat" idea, the dread of Macbeth quotations, of speaking the "tag" at rehearsal, of opening an umbrella within the theatre walls, and the rest of it—we came upon horseshoes, and I showed him a very simple little bangle I had picked up on the Devon coast, with a horseshoe in tiny seed-pearls, which, unclaimed, I had continued to wear.

"Oh! You ought not to wear a wretched little thing like that!" he exclaimed. "You must let me send you one to wear 'for luck.'"

He took the slim bracelet and turned it over. A few weeks later I received a package by post, a flat morocco box with the name of a Glasgow jeweller inside, containing a bracelet made on the scheme of the other, but with fine pearls along the wrist and in the horseshoe, thus giving an effect of intense whiteness which was singular, but which I liked as coming from him.

Rarely delightful occasions were those when I saw him, generally during afternoon performances, in his theatre dressing-room. During an evening performance of *Faust* (the revival, with Cecilia Loftus as

Margaret) I saw him in the red, grotesque costume of Mephisto. Seeing me look aghast at his changed countenance, he executed some extravagant gyrations, then excused himself. "I wanted to see the horror in those eyes of yours," he said. It was just before the Brocken scene, and I was privileged to watch the adjustment of his rolled-up cloak by a nimble dresser; it was fastened to his shoulders by rings hung upon hooks as if it had been a curtain.

Another evening I saw him on the stage, still in his Charles the First costume, and on the darkened stage he placed me on the throne-like chair he had but just vacated, and, seated on a stool at my side, talked to me as if we were in a drawing-room, and no one waiting to "shut up" or to depart, after a word from the chief. It was then I noticed the almost weird likeness of him, as he had "made himself up," to the celebrated picture of the martyr-king on the white horse which seemed riding towards me when, as a child, I walked along the corridor at Warwick Castle.

The last time we met was in his dressing-room at Drury Lane during an afternoon performance of *Dante*. A youthful, polite individual had appeared in the box where I was with my dear lately departed and lamented friend, Mrs. Joseph Bennett, saying, "Mrs. Diehl, Sir Henry would like to see you"; and I had followed him, as he carefully conducted me through the choristers literally crowding the back of the extremely dirty stage, up some stairs, narrow, ladder-like, along a short passage, to the small dressing-room where Sir Henry, in his blanket-like brown costume with the hideous brown head-gear framing his thin face, wel-

comed me. Time was short; but he was calm, as usual, only in, for him, a gruesome humour. On a previous occasion, a year or two before, he had bitterly said, "They are killing me"—the only plaint I ever heard from his lips. But now it was almost in a despairing tone that he said, "A man of my age ought not to have to work like this. *The only comfort is, it cannot last long.*"

And those prophetic, miserable words were the last I heard from his lips. I was retiring into an obscure part of Somerset to write hard. There the news came to me of his death. Thinking of those last words, I could not grieve for him. He was not a mere ephemeral world-insect; he was a real citizen of the universe; he had shaken off his mortal coil, and expanded into greatness in the free, wide atmosphere of eternity.

CHAPTER XVIII

IT was during the eighties that the problem of education occupied my spare moments with anxious ponderings on what was best for my children, as well as how to fulfil my self-made promise to my husband that, in my giving them a faith in which he had no shadow of belief, they should not "cost him a penny."

My violent and protracted efforts at money-making, both by my pen and music-teaching, always make me shudder slightly when I think of them. However, they brought me in contact with many wonderfully gifted personages, with great schemes and projects—at least, my teaching life certainly did.

It was while I was making large sums by novels—especially the anonymous stories—that I had to refuse a fine offer from Ferdinand Hiller to migrate to Cologne. I was to have a principal professorship at the Conservatoire, and he would also guarantee me private pupils.

Very shortly after, when Weist Hill was appointed Principal of the newly founded "Guildhall School of Music," he wrote, asking me to accept one of the best professorships at high terms. I confess I was greatly tempted. I believed in the scheme. Meanwhile, such toil would have been a drag upon my inventive literary

work; *and*, if I could only pass on the appointment offered to my father, it would solve a vexed question which was grieving and worrying me.

After his life of strenuous effort, my poor father had just been curtly dismissed his musical professorship at the Finchley College, which produced the greater half of his income. The Principal had retired. The "new broom's" first act was to sweep out the meek old professor from the hut in the corner of the playground, where the boys stole quarters of an hour from their play to learn an art, or its rudiments. They one and all liked my father; he was sympathetic and made work pleasant. But to the new broom the old, patient teacher was but a handful of dust; out he must go! He received a quarter's notice, without a word of explanation—the curtest, rudest dismissal I have ever known. I went at once to console; found my father a broken and broken-hearted man, but "Eliza," as usual, queen of the situation. Already she had arranged and planned crutches to hold them up, and her crutches were genuine staffs. I do believe, if she had been suddenly dropped in front of a retreating army, she would have led them back to victory.

Still—well, I went to Weist Hill. He did me the honour to regret my decision. But one of the very greatest happinesses of my life—I think the very greatest of all—was when I had a note from my father, telling me of the offer of the professorship from Weist Hill, and his acceptance of it.

After that, his difficulties were over. For the last years of his good, laborious life he had congenial, well-paid work. He also wrote and published a book for

his big harmony class. He wrote it in German. I did the English book as it stands. He would not, however, accept the English terminology adopted by English writers on composition. I had to submit. A German born, he lived and died the most German of Germans—only an exile, because of his adored "Eliza." I could but admire the anomaly. Before I had resigned my appointment at the North London Collegiate School, Miss Buss invited me to accompany herself and Mrs. Bryant to see Cambridge—especially the women's colleges—Newnham and Girton. I willingly set aside a day. Not only was I deeply interested in all schemes to render females women, instead of dolls, but I was still under the delusion that my children would naturally wish to *be* and to *do* something to raise themselves and others in the scale of creation. I fully expected at least one of my three daughters (not the dear, delicate, thoughtful eldest, who had no physical strength, but one of the others) to have laudable ambitions in the direction of some sort of unselfish work.

Thus one early morning I met Miss Buss and Mrs. Bryant at the London terminus.

It was a great privilege to be the "bad third" to such a couple!

Miss Buss's career as literal foundress of high schools and secondary schools for her own sex is too well known to need comment. For herself, she claimed but small credit in the great, I may say, national movement to make of women not men's playthings and slaves, but human beings, possessing, besides a heart, a mind and soul.

"I know my limitations," she once said to me. "I have the faculty of organisation and a will to persevere —a capacity for work. But I am not a Sophie Bryant! She is more learned than any man I know; more tender than any woman I have ever met!"

Knowing this, I feel sure that as regards the great project of her life, the founding of those schools in the north-west district of London which were the parents of all other schools of the same calibre, the lamented Miss Buss died happy, knowing that Mrs. Bryant would be her successor.

To those who do not already know what that simple, charming lady, Sophie Bryant, has done with her brain, equal to that of any of the greatest of men, I may mention a few details of her career.

Educated in her early years by her father, the Rev. Dr. Willock, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, who afterwards accepted the "cure" of a large parish in the north of Ireland, she showed, even in childhood, a taste for philosophy and psychology. So it is not astonishing to find that when, in May, 1878, the announcement that henceforward the degree examinations of the University of London would be open to women was made public, Sophie Bryant shortly after matriculated, obtaining in 1881 the degree of B.Sc. (taking first-class honours in Moral Science), and, three years later, the Doctorate of Science, being not only the first woman ever honoured by that degree, but the second *individual* to take it in the London University in the Moral Science branch.

It is not surprising that one with so powerful a mind and brain should by 1890 have become the author

of thirty or more learned volumes and pamphlets. Strength demands activity. By a brain-worker's productions we may gauge his force. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

All women should worship the very name of Sophie Bryant, for she has hoisted the flag of equality with envied man, in man's hitherto unchallenged supremacy —that of the mind and brain! That the girl students under her supervision are enviable creatures they themselves well know.

With these two great, noble women, who have lived and worked entirely in a public spirit, devoting all their energies and powers to the benefit of others without the minutest thought of self, I spent a memorable day in the learned academic town on the banks of the Cam.

If I remember rightly, we first visited Newnham, a somewhat ascetically arranged College, with an urbane and gentle Principal. My chief recollection is the study-room of the daughter of the great Gladstone, whose portrait, hung over the mantelpiece, was beautified by the foliage of a carefully trained creeper, the roots of which lived in pots below. Then, I believe, it was at Newnham that I was introduced to the descendant of the Herschels—a charming young lady with whom I had a deeply interesting conversation, for I could repeat some childish reminiscences related to me by my mother, who had been taken by, I think, Mrs. Charles James Fox, who lived at St. Ann's Hill, to visit the great Herschels. Of Caroline Herschel my mother had a very sweet recollection.

Miss Herschel afterwards sent me a framed photo-

graph of the great astronomer, a spontaneous gift which I greatly cherish.

Then we took luncheon in the rooms of a Fellow of a very fine old College. I forget the names of both the Fellow and his College, but I remember the room in which we lunched. It seemed to have windows at each end. In any case, there was plenty of light to show off the pale oak furniture, and the light oak frames of the æsthetic engravings and photographs of celebrated pictures.

It may be a mistake of mine, but both the Fellow—still quite a young man—and another Fellow, who was his *aide* and vice at the other end of the table, although they were most courteously hospitable, did not seem altogether at their ease, as, for instance, they would have been in the time of general entertainment of fair sisters and cousins and complaisant, admiring aunts. They were half embarrassed, half diffident, and wholly stilted and reserved. It was ungrateful in me, but I felt greatly relieved when the entertainment was at an end and we were comfortably seated in our "fly," which, I think, Miss Buss had chartered for the day.

On our way to Girton College we halted at another men's College, where Mrs. Bryant wished to consult a certain Don of her acquaintance on some knotty point or another.

During her absence Miss Buss was telling me about the learned author of *Alice in Wonderland*. She knew him. She said that it was almost incredible to her how a bachelor, a man of great learning, and one of whom she would never have expected the remotest acquaint-

ance with the mental habits common to the feminine young, could have produced that book.

"Because," she said, "the invariable characteristic of these young feminine minds is to jumble everything together—their lessons, their play, their home experiences, the amusing books they read—everything! The great difficulty is to make them think properly, to get a clear, distinct idea out of them. He has represented their mind-processes in 'Alice' in a manner which can only be explained by the words 'genius,' 'inspiration.'"

This, from one whose large mental and physical powers were absorbed in the understanding of children's minds so as to direct and further those minds in the direction most calculated to develop their special tendencies, was high praise.

A somewhat lengthy drive along a smooth road bordered by flat, meadow-spread country, Holland-like rather than typical of England, except in Marshland, brought us to the fine building standing bravely among the low-lying fields, Girton.

We drove in to the imposing front entrance, and Miss Buss, Mrs. Bryant, and the Lady Principal conversed in the latter's luxurious private drawing-room. Then we went our various ways to visit our friends among the students.

Above, the neat parlourmaids, in their equally neat uniform, the conventional black frocks and befurbelowed caps and aprons, were flitting in and out of the students' rooms with afternoon tea-trays. I first visited Miss Mabel Taylor (the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, of Aston Rowant), and was delighted with the artistic

"interior" of her rooms—study and bedchamber furnished in Japanese black lacquer, the alcove sheltered by rich curtains; and the handsome girl, with the glowing complexion and the big, eloquent dark eyes, crouching on a stool in her soft black velvet frock with the red sash—a subject to entice any painter of the beautiful in womanhood and its surroundings. Then to Miss Maude Todd (afterwards manageress to the well-known Girls' College, Tudor Hall, Forest Hill; founded by her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Todd).

Miss Todd's room was large, but meant study alone; study close, persistent, energetic. And the determined young lady was at work. Tea-time was naught to her. She received me most kindly in spite of my interruption; but, out of respect to the big volumes open before her as well as to their reader, I soon took my departure, and went on to Miss Burstall's rooms.

I had known this very-much-alive young creature at Camden School. She was now enjoying a swim in the sea of learning, like a young fish with a passion for its native element. In all too brief talks with Miss Burstall, I had invariably felt newly electrified with power of action. (Some highly charged young minds have this effect upon their elders.) I was not astonished to find that the superabundance of energy in this striking girl acted widely—in the area far beyond that of the technical learning she was amassing in preparation for degree-examinations. Among other photographs of eminent persons, for instance, she had some of Henry Irving. It was, at first, a puzzle to me why he was so great a hero in the eyes of the young of both sexes. For he himself produced the impression of never having been

young. His mind seemed, as it were, the continuation of some vast bygone mind, rather than a fresh creation. Still, in the young there appears to survive somewhat of instinct. The young are sensitive, receptive. Animals know those who love them—will pick them out among a crowd—so, perhaps, fresh young possessors of undeveloped souls respond to the centres of the genius which is their magnet, without knowing why. Miss Burstall is, I believe, in a head position over schools in Manchester. When I heard this, I was not surprised. She would be as asbestos in the fires of life and effort.

Meeting my distinguished companions again, we dined in the big hall, where it was most interesting to watch the crowd of "sweet girl-graduates" seated at the long tables, without a "ray" of man, as Dickens terms it. (In *The Haunted Man* the little newsvendor Tetterby harangues his many little lads about the importance of the girl-babe, their little sister, reminding them that hitherto their young days have not been brightened by "a ray of gal.")

The dinner was very plain, but wholesome. No soup or fish—boiled beef and some sort of hash and stew — and various simple puddings. While the assemblage melted away, after their subdued murmurings about the dinner-tables — some, indeed, I noted, ate their dinners in a dignified silence—we hastened to cloak and bonnet ourselves for the drive to "catch" the train, after whose departure our transit to our several homes would have been somewhat problematic.

We had a compartment to ourselves. I had primed myself to listen attentively to all Miss Buss and Mrs.

Bryant had to add to the animated conversation on education—subjects which had brightened our tedious drive. Both ladies were as fresh as when they started in the morning. But I, I was "dog-tired." To my discomfiture, no sooner were we well on our way, than I was plunged into that seemingly bottomless abyss of absolute slumber which, as far as I am concerned, is not the sleep of people who go to bed and get up in the morning at regular hours. (Sleep is a coquettish maiden. Seek her, and she flees; try to avoid her, and she clasps you triumphantly in her embrace.) It was most disconcerting to me to be tenderly awakened, and, like one drugged, to be escorted to our cab, and compassionately "dropped" at my abode. I had meant to take mental notes of that educational interview between those two great women. Once more, physical weakness had (for the millionth time! It was about that) floored me. But if there is one certainty left us besides that that we must die, it is this, we must "dree our weird." Struggle, rage, fight—weakness will step in and crush us as if we were obnoxious insects.

I had seen the great colleges for my own sex. My next acquaintance with these worshipful abodes of learning was with Stonyhurst College, Lancashire.

After my clever, beautiful eldest son had learnt as much as Baylis House could teach, he was, in his wish for home shelter, pursuing his studies at the male prototype of Miss Buss's schools for girls, the North London Collegiate School for Boys, when, one day, he returned ill. In anxiety to shine in some examination, he had concealed severe pain, and a

state of acute pleurisy, untreated, had established a chronic condition.

Dr. Walshe, the chest authority—who had said, after diagnosing cicatrisation of my own lungs after disease (I remember him—a little man—and his *fiat*, "Well, you're a *wiry* one!)—spoke feelingly of the state of "the dear boy's chest." "If he were mine," he said, "I should keep him in the Engadine." The next best move in our case (when explained) he admitted would be residence in the Isle of Wight, preferably Shanklin or Sandown.

To Sandown we sent him, to a private tutor's, for about two years. Once more examined by the eminent authority—"Bracing air, and plenty of it," was the decree.

Thus he went to Stonyhurst. My first director and confessor—Father Eyre, S.J.—who was also my life-long friend, eagerly welcomed the idea of his passage through the College. Accordingly one spring day shortly before Easter we, at Father Eyre's invitation, escorted the "new boy" to Stonyhurst College.

It was my first glimpse of Lancashire. Passing through the densely populated, chimney-besprinkled country between Manchester and Blackburn, my heart misgave me on the subject of "fresh air, and plenty of it," for my boy. But as we drove steadily uphill in a carriage from the black town (two Jesuit fathers, with a playful black, shaggy pup they were taking back to the College, were our companions), clear, chill, pure air began to encircle us, to stream in through chinks and crannies. I saw hedges and trees against the starlit sky.

After miles of climbing—so it seemed to me, and doubtless was—we were on the level again, and driving in the dark along a smooth drive leading to the College. The appealing clang of the door-bell was almost instantly followed by a small crowd of clerics rushing out like impatient schoolboys, welcoming, embracing the two fathers, vociferating joyously over the leaping puppy, who was tugging at his chain, and leading him within in a triumphant procession, until Father Eyre, tall, imposing, came out and welcomed us as dear and cherished friends, when there was a hush, a scurry off. We were practically left instantly alone with the Rector, who escorted us within, his arm paternally on the shoulder of the new pupil.

After a half-hour of kindly, welcoming converse in the big, warm guest-room, we re-entered our "fly" and proceeded to our head-quarters, the inn near the College frequented by relatives visiting the students. I had left my first-born son in the great College; my parting gaze at him was as he stood, Father Eyre's protecting arm about him, Father Eyre's parting words ringing in my ears.

"He is to be court favourite," he assured me. "And *I will be his mother now.*"

I knew what those words meant. My boy would not die for want of a watchful eye to note any evil symptoms, a resolute will to check any of the wild daring, the defiance of hygienic conditions, so prominent in most of the young threatened by the dread disease "consumption."

Next morning, as we made our way up the wide road bordered by wind-blown trees, at the end of which was

the fine old castle-like building—a tower centre, with wings stretching out on either side—I was not concerned upon the subject of "fresh air, and plenty of it." Grand volumes of air seemed to meet us at every step. A vigorous wind, fresh from the source of winds, wherever that may be, blew seemingly from all the quarters in succession. When we had fought our way up that avenue, and came to a halt at the big stone entrance, I wondered to find myself a whole body instead of a heap of fragments.

And thus, with rare intervals, the wind blew during our few days' visit to the Rector.

The College was then being greatly enlarged. Father Eyre, with pardonable pride, showed us everything—the fine classrooms, dormitories, and "playrooms" (each with a full-sized billiard-table) in the new white stone wings, the great marble swimming-bath, the playgrounds, all the various elaborations for the student-young which have been invented by the fertile brains of latter-day architects. Then he took us to the observatory. Father Perry, the renowned astronomer, was away, but his assistant showed us all (and in my case far more than I really understood). Later in the afternoon—indeed, after dusk—one day, we went to view the moon and some of the planets under observation. My husband—seated on the chair under the revolving dome—saw much that was wonderful through the giant telescope. When my turn came to gaze I saw nothing but a hazy chaos.

Dining each day with the Rector, we met some of the very distinguished fathers—notably Father Harper, the great philosophical genius, who had already pub-

lished some of his learned translations of the philosophical treatises of St. Thomas Aquinas. He was a cheery soul, full of life, enjoying a good anecdote with the zest for innocent fun which is one of the characteristics of those whose last thought is the life and enjoyment of self. Then we had a musical afternoon. Father Sircom, a mathematical and chemical authority, was a music-lover. He not only played, but loved his violoncello. I played one of the grand pianofortes in a big room selected for the purpose to a few of the fathers who cared for music. Father Sircom played, and (this, I believe, was a somewhat exceptional occurrence) a novice, still enduring his arduous trial—whether he was worthy to be that cramped, laden servant of God, a Jesuit priest, or not—was invited by the Rector to hear what there was to hear. This fair, gentle-looking young man sang Stephen Adams's "Midshipmite" and another sea-song, and after I had played, said to me, "This is the greatest pleasure I have had since I joined the Order." He did not stay after that. The Rector dismissed him with a nod and a smile. Some years later I heard he had died of throat disease, and regretted the news less because he did not seem to me, then, capable of that height of self-abnegation which is only the initial necessity to enter an Order where self must die—if necessary, even a violent death—at the very portal.

Although my son, so recently invalided, felt the study hard during his stay at Stonyhurst, he took many prizes, and finally the mathematical medal. When still a youth he elected to go into business. First with Messrs. Pierce Leslie and Co., Indian merchants,

then he went to Madras (Surgeon-General Cornish thinking the climate might heal his lungs). Invalided home, he returned a year later to Bombay. After some eighteen months I received a telegram. He had been placed on board a mail steamer as a last resource to save his life.

After that I heard nothing for a month. I had to stay at home (how I hated that house after that !) while my husband and a recent son-in-law went to meet the steamer. They sent me no telegram, although I had implored it. Hours passed. Such torture is hardly earthly. When I heard the cab drive up, and my boy's voice, I could not move.

The voyage had renewed his life ; but he had a long, suffering convalescence. Then he became secretary to Sir Thomas Lipton, and married a sweet young friend of my own I had seen and loved as a child—Beatrice, the only child of the late Henry F. Frost (the learned musical critic of the *Standard, Athenæum*, and other papers), and for a few brief years enjoyed an ideal married life with an ideal young wife. Then, the old evil reasserted its existence. The bacillus which slays was at work in the lungs. In less than two years I had to stand by the bed on which my beloved first-born son lay, a meek, pale, shrunken corpse. I had to kneel by his flower-laden coffin in the little church, St. Vincent de Paul, Harrow Road, while the good, kind priest who had helped him to die a beautiful death said the funeral Mass.

CHAPTER XIX

DURING the latter years of my musical career and the beginning of my literary life I met many interesting and well-known personages of both artistic and literary fame.

On Sundays my first publisher, Mr. Trübner, kept open house at his big, square villa in Hamilton Terrace, where, after a dinner-party, the suite of dining and drawing-rooms, study and boudoir, were thrown open for a general reception of his and his wife's many friends. Here one met Mrs. Lynn Linton, the scathing satirist of the *Saturday Review*, cheek by jowl with her victims. The Countess of Caithness, wearing her monster diamonds, a dame both fair and portly, would be holding forth to a small, eager crowd of adherents to her spiritualistic tenets, while her dark, handsome son, the Duke de Pomar, a budding novelist, disported himself more or less eagerly among the fiction celebrities. Here, one night, came Herr Ludwig Barnay, a tremendous presence before which the crowd seemed to part, fall away, and become an audience impressed by his stentorian German utterances. German professors abounded. Patient writers of philosophical and scientific tomes—of which a score or so of copies sold yearly meant a success—hovered, pale, wan, wistful, gazing wonderingly at the butterflies of literature through their spectacles.

Almost every cosmopolitan celebrity in literature and art visiting England appeared and shone in Mr. Trübner's house. His wife I had known as a beautiful Belgian girl, the daughter of the Consul, Monsieur Delepierre. She was essentially gifted as a hostess, the centre of a *salon*, where she seemed to bloom under the admiring gaze of her visitors as a rose in the sunshine. No greater contrast in appearance could be imagined in the world of women than Mrs. Trübner, fair, gentle, radiating womanly sympathy, and the grim-visaged, owl-like Mrs. Lynn Linton. Still, Mrs. Lynn Linton was a feminine Janus. Her intellect all severity, frowning, sometimes even scowling, upon the crowd of writers she seemed created to demolish, her heart was that of a real woman, and a tender one. Indeed, she was entitled to be called a "mother-woman," although I think she had no children of her own.

At the Trübners' I met and talked with Bret Harte. Spare, lithe, thin-faced, his dark eyes shone with the fire of genius under his shock of whitening hair. He had "come on from a dinner." He was being considerably fêted, but there was no doubt but that he was humble with the humility common to the great in intellect. He was amazed to find that Englishwomen lived who revelled in his wonderful poetic fiction, who wept over *M'liss* and *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. He seemed astonished when I asked him for the faded white flower in his button-hole, which is a cherished relic of mine as it slowly turns to dust. He did not realise that a faded flower worn by a man whose genius has made pure white blossoms live in the midst of dust and garbage is a treasure to all who love humanity.

Years before we had met many at the Grossmiths' house in Kentish Town whose acquaintance we renewed later in other artistic haunts, among them being Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hatton (the latter a sweet, exquisitely sympathetic woman; may she rest in peace!), Mrs. Pender Cudlip (the novelist, Annie Thomas), and myriads of others, stars of greater or lesser magnitude, several of whom are already obliterated from this firmament, and may happily be shining elsewhere. The writer David Christie Murray was then a golden-haired young man fresh from successes as war correspondent. The verse-writer the "Marquis de Leuville" was to be met everywhere, dark, ponderous, but warmly condescending. Then occurred other experiences in the agreeable informal weekly receptions of the novelist and author, Mr. R. E. Francillon, and his charming wife—a daughter of the composer of "The Mountain Sylph," John Barnett—who first obtained musical celebrity as one of the renowned duettists, "the Sisters Doria."

For sixteen long years we lived among the writers and journalists close to the Regent's Park. Next door, and later on at the end of our terrace, dwelt the sprightly and often brilliant novelist, Florence Marryat. Dutton Cook lived, and died, close by. Many journalists of renown were within a stone's-throw, and were wont, with others from distances, to "drop in" on Mr. and Mrs. Francillon's evenings.

Mr. R. E. Francillon is too well known in the literary world to need description; and its members in various lines flocked about him. His "receptions" meant a crowd of more or less celebrated persons. I remem-

ber, among others, the MacCarthys, father and son, coming in heated after parliamentary work on the sultry summer nights; Julian Hawthorne, the wonderfully handsome son of the great Nathaniel, and a worthy literary successor of his father; Philip Bourke Marston, the blind poet; Mrs. Macquoid and her clever sons; Marie Corelli and her poet half-brother, Eric Mackay, who were both essentially musical; Louise Chandler Moulton, fair, gracious, beautiful. But these are only a few among the many. Editors, journalists, novelists, singers, instrumentalists; "their name was legion." And yet, strange to say, they all looked very much like the rest of educated, refined mankind! One had to hear, or speak with them, to dicover the difference.

During the seventies I accompanied our mutual friend, "Lizzie Philp," to dine with Mrs. Maxwell (Miss Braddon) at Lichfield House, Richmond.

The rooms, the instant I entered them, seemed to me as if they must have been the models from which Hablot K. Browne drew his interiors. Picturesque, with the most artistic taste of an inartistic period—that during which Dickens published *Bleak House, Dombey and Son*, and other works in numbers—there was a sense of going back into the past which has a certain fascination. With the exception of M. Eugène Rimmel and ourselves, it was purely a family gathering. The burly, florid "Max," as "Miss Braddon" called her husband, presided at the head of a long dining-table, around which clustered his handsome, brilliant sons and daughters. In the evening there was music. At its close, when we were dressing to depart in the gaunt,

yet handsome bedchamber with the huge "four-poste'r,' Mrs. Maxwell made me suffer tortures by her insistence upon buttoning my boots for me. The otherwise perfect evening was marred. I could realise the horrible feelings of the poor creatures who are tempted to number themselves among the twelve on Holy Thursday who submit to being foot-bathed by the great in supremacy—earthly and divine.

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It was during the "seventies," I think, or early in the "eighties," that, at the house in St. John's Wood of a Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, we dined with the great explosive inventor, Nobel.

He seemed a diminutive, somewhat delicate man. Dark, thin, with great appealing eyes, he had the sensitive, apologetic manner of the nervous invalid. Possibly because of this hypersusceptibility, we were not enlightened by our hosts as to his identity until afterwards. That summer was chill and damp. As he cowered near a welcome wood fire warming his transparent hands, he spoke with avidity of more genial climes. He spoke well—if with a certain fastidious exclusiveness—brightening when the subject of the horse happened to crop up in the conversation. He had evidently a vivid interest in his stud of many steeds. Afterwards, to hear that this gentle, earnest little creature had invented that which, when fully developed, might literally blow humanity from the face of the globe, was so anomalous a statement that in the face of fact one feared a fiction.

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Another memory recurs.

At a private concert at Lord Dudley's, shortly before the Zulu disturbance, I was introduced by him to the Prince Imperial of France.

He could be summed up as "an ingenuous youth." There seemed to me a striking likeness in his gentle eyes and pensive brows to his beautiful mother. Indeed, there was in his kindly manner the thoughtful tenderness, the certain unworldly aloofness and calm of those chosen beings who, "loved by the gods," die young. There was that in him which seems above and beyond the mere earthly being. To him, I have often since thought, an empire's crown, with its weighty responsibilities, would have been but a crown of thorns.

CHAPTER XX

THINKING upon that young, promising life cut short is saddening. A "vale of tears"; yes, this world is that. But better natural tears than those tears of blood—horror and grief at the miscarriage of God's gifts by the mortals on whom they have been bestowed.

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Of one of my other children it behoves me to speak—my "painter-boy," born in 1870—because, as it were, on his account I had the privilege of a lengthy interview with the then Sir Frederic Leighton, afterwards Lord Leighton.

The boy had been a difficult pupil at Baylis House. Upon everything but music and drawing he resolutely turned his back. Instead of learning his lessons, he scrawled caricatures of masters and pupils on the pages. After much patience on the part of one of the most patient of Principals, Mr. William Butt, I received a letter from that long-suffering man, who had probably never been so obstinately defied by any pupil before.

"Arthur is gifted, not only in capacity in the schoolroom, but in the playground," he wrote. "He can do anything he likes better than any one in the school. But he will do *nothing*. Not only this; but I warn

you that if you do not remove him as soon as convenient, I may have to horsewhip him."

I was accustomed to take sudden flights to the various schools. An alarming telegram without particulars would take me to a convent—to find danger past. A miserable letter—"By the time you get this I shall be dead"—from one of the boys sent me to Slough by the next train. It was not long before I had rescued the naughty boy from a "horsewhipping" he doubtless well deserved, had brought him home undismayed, and had engaged a painting master for him.

This was the late Mr. Clint Miles, the well-known painter and professor. My son has often told me that those few lessons alone made a painter of him. However that may have been, Mr. Miles, after a few séances, simply said the boy knew all he could teach him. It seemed that, to parody James Davison's phrase, "he was born with a paint-brush in his hand."

We entered him first at the well-known Heatherley's, later at Mr. Calderon's studio. Here he seemed to create the usual effect. In both places he did what he chose. At the last moment he plunged in and painted in such a fashion as to create excitement among the other patient, plodding students.

I was literally at my wits' end what to do for the best, when my husband—who had been a favourite subaltern under Sir Frederic Leighton and Mr. Val Prinsep in the "Artists' Corps" of the volunteers—said he was sure the great man would give his advice if I asked him in his name as one of his former soldiers.

He was right. Sir Frederic wrote kindly. He was

at home to his friends on Sundays. If I would bring the boy and specimens of his work, his advice was entirely at our service. Not without qualms at daring to intrude upon such a man, even at his invitation, I chose a couple of Arthur's more extraordinary productions, and we proceeded the next Sunday to that wonderful temple of art, Sir Frederic's historic house.

Wonderful house! It seemed to me, as I passed the silent hall and ascended the noble staircase, as if this must be a *replica* of one of those Athenian temples in the hush within whose walls the philosophers wrestled with life-problems, artists were inspired, men such as Pericles planned the roads to their supremacy.

The genial way in which the great man rose from a chair where he was, I think, reading some letters, shook hands with us both, and asked after his "old comrade," reassured me. But when, as he turned to Arthur, who was gazing around at the huge easels, the big canvases, the movable platforms, the tapestries, sketches, statuettes, and other gorgeous contents of the now well-known studio, and said, "Well, my little man, and what have you brought to show me?" I unfastened the canvases in some trepidation.

Sir Frederic looked at both in silence, put one aside, then taking the other—it was a curious little painting of an old-world, solitary, gabled house, surrounded by weird copse and marshland, all dark against a glowing sunset of a peculiar, clear primrose hue, which I remembered seeing once or twice myself on the east coast in early autumn—gazed seriously at it in all lights, examined it closely, then set it carefully on his knee and gazed at it in such abstraction that he was unaware that the boy

had wandered off nonchalantly. He was as indifferent to his work after he had done it as a bird is to the song it has just sent out into the air, and generally flew off elsewhere immediately afterwards, as if suddenly bored, also like a bird.

For an instant Sir Frederic looked astonished. Then, as he saw the boy loitering, then pausing and gazing at everything, his hands in his pockets, he smiled.

"However he painted that sky I cannot imagine," he emphatically said. "I confess I could not do it." Then he asked questions about Arthur's work, and about himself and his ways, and again looked at the picture, which seemed to fascinate him.

"He is, of course, a prodigy—a genius," he said. "Meanwhile, if he has not the necessary character, it will be of little use to him—in fact, the reverse! If, as I gather from you, he only goes to his work by 'fits and starts'—if, as I see, he does not realise his gift, is not ambitious—there is no hope!"

He was talking over what might be done, what could be done, for the best, when suddenly Arthur came back—having, according to his ideas, seen all there was to see. Sir Frederic asked him kindly what had pleased him most.

Then came a bad moment for me.

"I like some of the figure-sketches," he replied. "But why do you hang up those landscape-sketches? I don't think *they* are worth much."

Sir Frederic laughed. "We hear the truth from young lips—and a good thing too!" he genially said. "My boy, your judgment is correct. I am no land-

scape-painter. I only hang those as reminiscences of certain times when I was a boy like you!"

Then, as if his opinion was rather confirmed by the child's unconscious criticism than otherwise, he began to talk to him—precious words cut short by the entrance of two tall, handsome, loud-speaking society demoiselles, followed by their chaperon, an older lady who had a resemblance to themselves, and a meek young man—Sir Frederic afterwards informed me he had been a "prodigy," but had not yet fulfilled his promise. I snatched a moment to suggest that we had better depart; but the great painter somewhat peremptorily desired me to remain. When the ladies had departed he would have more to say to me.

It seemed to me somewhat hard for such a man to be simply playing showman—for that, as Sir Frederic "took us round" his artistic palace, it literally was—to four females of various ages and two prodigies in different stages of the chrysalis condition. But the urbane and gentle man did not seem wearied or impatient. Only when, as we had passed through the dining-room, where the "cover for one" already laid upon the huge round table looked singularly pathetic in its suggestion of a life as lonely as that of the eagle on the mountain-top, and were entering the fine old garden with its smooth turf dotted with grand old trees, did he remark upon, with what seemed to me like slight relief, a black canopy of dense cloud which was steadily rising from the south-western horizon.

"We can hardly venture," he began, just as a suggestive mutter of approaching thunder evidently alarmed the ladies, who promptly fled, together with their over-

grown-prodigy companion. I was listening for the promised counsel after Sir Frederic had sped his parting guests and had, after a reassuring "It will only be a thunder shower," asked me to be seated in the beautiful vestibule, when there was a flash and a roar; the storm broke; the hail pattered on the glass roofs —we were weather-bound.

Back to the studio once more, while the lightning flashed, the thunder reverberated, and the rain drove in volumes against the walls. The great painter himself showed his pictures to the boy, and talking with him earnestly, decided in his mind, as I could gather, listening, what his education really ought to be. When a ray of sunshine came and Arthur went to find a conveyance for our return home, I had an interview—the first and last—with the head of the art in England, in the marble, Moorish-looking chamber with the fountain below.

"He is not fit to go through the Academy school," was his *fiat*, with explanations not entirely laudatory as to the whole scheme of that painters' college. "Send him to Italy, if you can, by hook or by crook."

We obeyed. We sent him, carefully placed in a family, and as a student in Stefani's studio in Milan, through introductions. He had many adventures of all kinds. Returning at seventeen, he sent in a picture ("Aldeburgh Quay") to the Academy, and it was hung on the line. Meanwhile he fell in love with a sick-nurse who was nursing one of his sisters through one of the yearly diphtherias or other unnecessary diseases which persecuted us; and suddenly disappearing, married her, wandered about Great Britain, settled

first in one place, then in another, then fled to America, where his twenty-years-older wife joined him and died, after which he married a widow with several children, and has since absolutely disappeared from our ken.

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CHAPTER XXI

BEFORE quitting the subject of my years in the great black city I have never been able really, personally, to love—preferring, for instance, even a cave on the seashore, with the new daily skies above, the new daily waves rushing in, or a very hut in the green fields among the bird-haunted trees and hedges, to the most glorious of artistic dwellings in the smoke, were it possibly to be mine—I must record aquaintance with a few more great minds, one or two cherished days spent near those who "salt" mankind in general.

It was during the eighties that I attended one of the interesting receptions given by the artistic Mrs. Tennant in her lovely house near Whitehall, and was introduced to two wonderful little girls. The elder, who had a remarkable face of her own, even then showed great character. A tall, slim child, with long locks floating down her back which seemed continually in her way—she was devoted then to the animal world, keeping and rearing the strangest pets on "the leads" in the rear of the house, among them fluffy little owlets. Afterwards distinguishing herself as the successful painter of wild child-subjects—as, when one comes to think of it, would be a natural sequence to one devoted to the wild creatures of the woods in her early years—

she ended by becoming the spouse of the great explorer Stanley.

Mrs. Tennant was one of those queens of the *salon* who attract society "lions" and "lionesses" in some mysterious fashion. In one afternoon I met, and was introduced to, the poet Browning—a comfortable-looking old man, with the unctuous, indulgent manner of speaking which I unconsciously associate with Nonconformist ministers—who sat placidly in an elbow-chair, and held forth in soul-filling phrases to a small circle of devout worshippers; and the renowned Mrs. Norton, whose novels, once considered as too *risqué* to be openly discussed, would now be thought but timid advances towards the fictional outspeaking of the era (Mrs. Norton was a stout, handsome woman, nearing old age); and to "Ouida," an odd-looking, if dainty, individual.

I had noticed this slim lady, who entered the rooms by the door in the back drawing-room, because after she had established herself on a chair, she sat almost motionless, looking neither to her right nor to her left, but seemingly gazing in absolute abstraction at her pair of very distinguished-looking little feet, extremely well shod, stretched out before her.

Her hat was of a bygone build and really unbecoming (semi-mushroom) shape, and from its brim depended a deep edging of black lace, so concealing her features that I could only really see a firm chin. After dismissing somewhat cavalierly those who dared so far as to address her without, I should judge, absolute and undeniable credentials to justify the procedure, she lapsed, time after time, into the reserve and immobility

which seemed her prevailing characteristic, until, as spontaneously as she appeared, she disappeared—so swiftly and unobtrusively that I had but turned my head a few moments while speaking with some one, and as I once more glanced at her chair it was empty. "Ouida"—who had puzzled, baffled, excited, and sometimes terrified me when, as a young girl, I had read her first serial novel in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*—was gone!

Speaking of poets—for, of course, Browning ranks as a chief among his brethren, and no one who has read, among other beautiful imaginings of "Ouida's," *Two Little Wooden Shoes,* will deny that if she had spoken in verse instead of prose she would have distanced most of the men poets—I may allude to my meetings with two essentially poetic writers in both prose and verse—Mr. Hichens and Mr. F. E. Weatherly.

Although I had already become acquainted with each on separate occasions, I met both together at a soirée of the artistic association which dubbed itself "the Salon" —at a well-known gallery of artists in water-colours in the vicinity of Regent Street. Much good music was performed—the Indian songstress, Alice Gomez, had a striking success. Authors, journalists, prominent lawyers and doctors, were present by the score. The "lion," some otherwise inaccessible editor, was to be seen conversing with some journalistic "lamb" who had never "contributed to his columns." "John Strange Winter" I saw—the fine, handsome possessor of a pair of beautifully moulded arms—dressed in black lace, which harmonised well with her masses of dark, wavy hair and brilliant dark eyes, chatting vigorously

with a deferential, admiring old gentleman in the vestibule. I was introduced to the novelistic brother of a gifted musician, the author of a host of delightful stories, Mr. Fitzgerald Molloy—and indeed to many knights of the pen space forbids me to enumerate.

Mr. Hichens was then a very young man of a somewhat Nero-like cast of feature under his thick dark curls, but so brimming over with his yet undeveloped literary inspirations, so full of the inward warring of his many mental gifts, that I being, as I have come to think, very sensitive of the souls and minds of others who may happen to be near me, always felt somewhat oppressed in his immediate neighbourhood, as if an extinguisher had been suddenly lowered upon my mental being and it called out for light and air.

This is a sensation I have always had near those possessed of great but undeveloped powers. So I was not astonished later at Mr. Hichens's outburst of capacity—first his brilliant criticisms in *The World* newspaper, then his novels, plays, and the rest.

At that time he had only published a single story in book form, *The Coastguard's Secret,* and asked my candid opinion of a MS. novel, if I would read it.

I was so much honoured that I was not even undismayed by the bulk of the MS., which was so interminably lengthy that it would have burst the covers of any stout novelistic volumes less in number than four—perhaps even five. No plot will stand such elaboration without injury. No characters—no matter with what mastery they are drawn—will bear such practically unlimited attenuation. I found the style perfect—every paragraph bristling with talent—yet my

candid opinion was that the MS. would not bear condensation. Its scheme forbade, for the very cleverest story which is a mile long when a furlong would almost be too considerable an extension can hardly be successfully issued to the public, who in their recreations must never know *satiety*.

As all novel-readers know, the tales signed by the now world-renowned novelist cannot ever be said to err in diffuseness. In the very longest, the beautiful *Garden of Allah*, there is no superfluous word. But I must halt, for I confess Mr. Hichens the chief favourite among my several favourite novelists. (Mrs. W. K. Clifford comes second; both have lifted me out of a world of pain, grief, trouble—many a time—into their lovely worlds.) *The Garden of Allah*—that great prose poem of all time—I have read at least ten times, and hope to read it, even now, ten times more! . . . Even when not actually reading its pages, I can visit Count Anteoni's desert garden-paradise—hear the trickling streamlets under the shade of tropical foliage where the lovesick Larbi played the flute—see the cassocked, comforting old form of the priest of the little, humble desert church, with his white-and-tan dog Bous-Bous joyously capering about him as he issued forth from his simple presbytery—see the vast desert stretching hot, drear, silent—miles of waste where the weary may drop and die and wither and scorch until the inexorable sun bleaches their poor bones into whiteness. . . .

Mr. Hichens is a great writer.

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I first saw the delicate, refined-looking Mr. Fred. E.

Weatherly seated in a dark corner within the screen at St. James's Hall, where clustered the performers leaving and ascending the platform. His fine, broad-craniumed head, his face, with a certain rapt, meditative look, reminded me so forcibly of a celebrated youthful portrait of the author of the *Angel of the House*, Coventry Patmore, that, forgetting the exigencies of Old Time, I inquired whether the young man were the poet, who then was already aged.

My husband's most successful song, "Jack's Yarn," was a musical setting of verses by Mr. Weatherly. So was the song which, I believe, was that with which Mr. Maybrick, writing under the pseudonym of "Stephen Adams," most delighted his enormous public, "Nancy Lee." Curiously enough, by, if I remember rightly, the same post, Mr. Weatherly had sent "Nancy Lee" to my husband, and "Jack's Yarn" to Mr. Maybrick. Both were returned; they had failed to inspire the musicians with a suitable setting. Nothing daunted, Mr. Weatherly reversed his proceeding. "Nancy Lee" was dispatched to Mr. Maybrick, "Jack's Yarn" to my husband. Each composer must have sat down and written in hot haste. Very soon both were published, and both were signal successes (an encouragement to writers of lyrics when depressed by rejections, which may only mean that the fitting collaborator is not yet found).

We visited Mr. Weatherly and his wife at the beautiful, artistic house specially built for them at Raynes Park, near Wimbledon—a gem of architecture of a bygone, more romantic period—with a centre hall and wide staircase, upon whose gallery opened the

suite of bedchambers above the charmingly designed reception-rooms.

One of the most extraordinary of workers, Mr. Weatherly's long list of poems and verses were penned while he was specially tutoring would-be graduates in Oxford. Then he elected that his degree of Master of Arts should remain in abeyance. He was called to the Bar, and after a short sojourn near London migrated to the county of his birth, Somerset, where he chooses to be a "shining light" on the Western Circuit.

In 1889, if not before, the "Music School Movement" began seriously to affect those teachers not appointed as professors in these academies, just as the establishment of high and secondary schools for girls crippled the private establishments, day-schools, and boarding-schools alike, and brought disaster to the doors of their permanent staffs of professors.

Private lessons—except those of the notabilities of the hour—may be said to have died, some by degrees, some by sudden death. Pupils were not likely to pay guineas or half-guineas per lesson to professors, when they could secure at any of these music schools a whole term's tuition from those very same teachers for the sum which would only otherwise cover two or three separate lessons.

My husband's pupils dwindled steadily. At last he had no longer a necessity to live in the metropolis. He thought to establish himself in Brighton. After sixteen years in Regent's Park Terrace we left for Brighton in January, 1891—ourselves, our two delicate children, a beloved spaniel, "Carlo," and the exquisite

fox-terrier puppy given me a few months previously by Mr. Weatherly. She was the daughter of his well-known West Country fox-terrier "Doctor," whom I had named, because of her lissom grace, "Fairy."

In Preston, the Brighton suburb, I wrote a sensational novel. Then, after three months of gauging the possibilities of work in the London-by-sea and finding the results *nil*, we resorted to Surrey, near to Reigate and Redhill. In a tiny green spot by the River Mole we rented an old cottage, which in itself was interesting, having been the country home of the Mr. Robertson who was one of the boon-companions of George the Fourth when Prince Regent.

Not only did tradition relate that on occasion the "First Gentleman in Europe" had, perforce, slept in the cottage itself, but that he rented the hall—a square house in square gardens just beyond the village green—for certain of his more lowly intimates, whose society he liked freely to enjoy in strict incognito. Added to the historic interest of this dwelling, Byron and Scott had dined in company at the very table, old, spindle-shanked, at which we daily ate; there was an overwhelming luxuriant garden, where roses ran riot, where groves of luscious fruit bushes flourished under wonderful apple and pear trees, where an ancient mulberry tree was a pleasant shade from the scorching afternoon sun, and where, from a cool walk ending in an arbour—a walk bordered by a fish-pond sheltered by quince and filbert trees—one could watch the sluggish Mole streaming listlessly and indolently along beyond a sloping meadow. Here I first learnt how noisy the quiet country can be. In a dead stillness the faintest sound tells. Children's

voices, the quacking of ducks, hissing of geese, squeaking of pigs, men shouting to each other in the farm-yards, then the noise of threshing, the slamming of gates, the sawing of wood.

Although the rose-covered house-front overlooked a green, mostly innocent of human tread, I had to take refuge in the garden. But the garden was far worse! A lively French nurse chattering to her charge in the adjacent grounds, besides the determined onslaught of wasps, flies, insects, drove me from my arbour finally hopeless, after the prolonged mooing of a disconsolate and seemingly unconsolable cow separated from her calf.

In this house I wrote and rewrote (four times) *Dr. Paull's Theory*, which—a transmigration story—was published simultaneously in England and America by J. Arrowsmith, of Bristol, and D. Appleton, of New York. It was the most troublesome piece of writing I have ever written "Finis" to, but I was repaid by the shoal of laudatory American reviews Messrs. Appleton forwarded me shortly afterwards. Even then my gratification was tempered by finding that I was supposed to be a citizen of the United States—there are writers there of the name of Diehl—and by being severely censured by a Boston journal for imagining that "educationist" was a possible word in our language. I also sold the murder-story I had written in Preston, Brighton—greatly helped by the clear, pure air sweeping down from the delightful downs, whose chalky slopes rose above the ivied church tower I could see from my window—for £100 to the "Automatic Library Company."

Also, here, came farewells and dismissals from pupils to my husband, notably that of a large school which had been a staple support to his dwindling income. The picturesque old house passed back to the widow of its aged owner at the end of six months. My husband's pupils were mostly in Surrey. We migrated to Redhill, where we lived ten years, and I went through a struggle for our livelihood which was beyond and above any experiences I have known.

A daughter returned from Germany; two sons out of employment came home to live. I dreamt a little story of a girl and two old men, wrote it, and sent it to Messrs. Stevens, with whom my failure to supply a novel instead of "the snake story" had checked further negotiations.

They sent me £25. I thought to write and offer to replace the story objected to, if they would accept another for £200—£100 to be paid on the acceptance of the substitute, the second £100 on acceptance of the second.

I wrote *Rachel's Reward*, and received the £100. I wrote the second. It was returned as "too *triste*." (I afterwards published it in book form, entitling it *A Woman's Cross*, and those who declare the life of a novel to be but three months can be assured by me that I was paid royalties on that book for four years after publication. So much for rejections!) I wrote another, and when I took the MS. myself to the office, and had an interview with the sympathetic Mr. George Stevens, he agreed to take two novels yearly for £300 the two, each paid for on acceptance.

I breathed more freely. But the music business

dwindled, faded; it was, I could see, slowly and surely dying. The reasons were not far to seek. Music schools had extinguished individual work by cheapening teaching, by studying the interests of the taught to the extinction of those of the teachers. Songs were a drug in the market. The popular successes were made by amateurs who seemed suddenly inspired, doubtless for some good reason. Their popularity was honestly won. Popular songs are always gems of the first water, although one may be a diamond, another a mere cairngorm.

The neglected musician ("the Commander-in-Chief," as Mr. Parry, of Ashdown and Parry, always called him) worried himself steadily until he was suddenly stricken with a heart failure, to which the doctors assigned an unpleasant Latin name.

No work. No worry. A cheerful, pleasant life. This was the medical *fiat* which I had to carry out.

Troubles never come alone. A few days after I had received this blow, came a rejection from Messrs. Stevens. I went to town, with part of the novel I was writing, and again interviewed Mr. George Stevens. (Already the kindly, handsome Mr. William was suffering from the malady which led to his early death.) I went home, exhausted by relief (those who know mental anguish in its varied forms, who have experienced its multitudinous tortures, will well understand). I was to have £400 yearly for four stories, in quarterly payments. A few days later came the agreement.

For some years my own aches and pains (which kept me a prisoner to the house, as a rule), my family anxi-

eties—those common to all wives and mothers—and the rest of the ills we earth-insects must, like all our brethren down to the wonderful little worker, the humble ant, expect, were rendered bearable by this arrangement, which, for the latter years of the lately departed century, worked smoothly indeed.

In 1898 my mother died. She was living at Ventnor, and would have no one by her at the end but myself. So I boarded in an agreeable house, and was with her daily in a Home for invalids where she had delightful quarters.

She was the valiant, high-spirited, opinionated "Eliza" to the last. Oppressed with dropsy, unable to lie down, threatened continuously with death at any moment, she conversed and behaved as if young and capable. She read, quoted, and commented on the news in her favourite *Times*. She was austere, critical, and only indulged in one complaint, that "it" (her transference elsewhere) took so long. At the last, although never acknowledging her weakness—it seemed to me as if her spirit clutched her body and refused to let it drop away—she fell into a state of alternate dozing and waking. During the last night and day she became disgusted. She would awaken suddenly with an almost angry, "What! here *still?*" Until I ventured to suggest that until we were quite resigned to live on as long as it pleased God we should live, we were not likely to be allowed to have our own desire, and die—did she think a few minutes, then say devoutly,-"Thy will be done."

After that, all was peace. When the last breaths passed away, she looked young, beautiful, happy. I never saw my mother look entirely happy until I saw

her lying smiling among the flowers on her bed—the real beauty whose curved mouth still lives in many busts and statues of her "affectionate friend" the great English sculptor Francis Chantrey.

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A son, now a recognised journalist, obtaining a post on the *Portsmouth Daily Mail*, and a young daughter defying us in selecting an unsuitable husband, determined us to migrate, especially as my husband thought that farther from London, he might, feeling stronger, practise his profession.

He visited various seaside resorts, and finally took a house in Paignton, near Torquay.

No sooner were we there than I had a rejection—and not from Mr. Stevens, but from "William Stevens, Limited." My patrons had become a company—limited!

The bad time tided over, I settled down to fear and unrest. Such continual, carking, wearing apprehension gnawed at my heart that life was passed by me literally on a rack.

I saw at once that the new company "jibbed" at the agreement in my case. I did not wonder. Only now and then had my novels appeared—about fourteen or sixteen were still unpublished when the old firm became a new one. The correspondence afterwards was strained. At last, after cavilling, rejecting, with much cavalier phrasing of their letters to me, they broadly hinted that with so many of my novels on hand they did not want any more.

The grim fact had to be faced. I was a "free lance,"

with nothing, no prospects, a delicate husband and two children, and only a weak body to obey my burdened soul.

Luckily we found a tenant for our house—who made a fresh agreement with the landlord—then sold off everything, and once more migrated—this time to Ealing, supposedly a healthy spot for invalids, yet literally London.

Here I sold a couple of novels to Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co.—whose literary adviser had chosen my story *Fire* for purchase at Ward and Downey's sale—and one to Messrs. Digby, Long, who were still paying me royalties on a cheaper edition of *A Woman's Cross*.

During the early nineties I had sold *A Woman's Whim* and *Passion's Puppets* to Messrs. Hutchinson. In fact, although I had written nearly fifty novels since I published *The Garden of Eden*, I had no unpublished MS. left to sell. So I had a fair hope that in the future "history would repeat itself." Therefore I accepted the kind offer of one of my childhood's friends to occupy rooms in a fine old deserted house, which belonged to her, in Somerset.

Romance pales in the presence of that ancient place. Once part of it was a gaol—part of it an old inn. Its garden (let to a market-gardener, who reared all sorts and kinds of things notable in vegetation in its loamy soil) was a dream of beauty. Three delicious years passed. Then my beloved dog, Fairy, who brightened my daily life, died.

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The illness of my first-born son brought me away. I had felt migration from the peace and beauty of the quiet country inevitable. I had to struggle once more —daily bread called to me with that imperious voice which will not be gainsaid.

* * * * * *

In Somerset I had one most notable experience, which, to all who cherish the memory of that extraordinary man and wonderful actor, Henry Irving, will be of interest. This was a visit to Keinton Mandeville, his birthplace.

About five miles was Keinton from our ancient mansion. We drove there leisurely—people can indulge in leisurely proceedings in the wilds of Somerset, where only the rooks and the rabbits seem busy—in a little "pony-trap," which might be chartered for a whole day for a few shillings. It was summer-time. The wide roads with their fine trees, the narrower lanes with their hedges a tangled luxuriance of flowers and tender greenery, were in their fullest beauty—and that is natural beauty indeed! As we neared the village the outlook was bleaker. Waste land was to be seen alternating with cornfields and meadows, dotted with grazing kine. Then came quarries of the stone which, in time, will bring wealth to Irving's village, and make of it a prosperous town. Then came the outskirts of the village proper. Ugly cottages and uglier small houses in ill-kept gardens—only one house visible of any pretension, and that was either the parsonage or a farm. Driving through the main street towards the principal inn—whose proprietor, it had been hinted to us by one

of the shrewd Somerset bodies, knew more of Henry Irving, his birth and infancy in Keinton, than any one else—Keinton seemed to me, with its common-looking shops and newly built labourers' dwellings, singularly like one of those Essex hamlets which spring up about some great factory.

The principal inn was an old-fashioned hostelry. But it was closed for the day. A woman in black came out and informed us with bated breath that at that very hour the old landlord was being buried in the churchyard.

After tea in an adjacent cottage, I asked leading questions of the kindly dame who served us, but desisted when I found that she, like others, did not appreciate the historic value of Keinton as the birthplace of an individual whose name is known, literally, to the whole world. When I asked her, finally, if she would tell me which was the cottage or house where the great actor was born, she came out and directed us "straight along the village to its other end."

"It's opposite the other inn," she vouchsafed. "You can't miss it—you'll see a sign hanging up."

I felt somewhat cheered. "I am glad they have put up something to show people which it is," I said, with my indignation at the Keinton insensibility partially appeased.

She looked puzzled for an instant. Then, doubtfully, she said, "Oh—yes. You can't miss it—'Lipton's tea.' It's the only place where you can get it in Keinton."

Reduced to speechlessness, I was proceeding along the road in the wake of my companions (husband and

daughter) when we met the funeral procession returning, two and two, in the approved, old-fashioned village style. The chief mourner was the unmarried daughter who had nursed her father to the end—reputedly his heiress; and her delicate, beautiful face was modelled after a pattern so conspicuously akin to the plan of Irving's extraordinary features, that if there were no other proof that he sprang from the stony Keinton soil, that resemblance would be sufficient.

Arrived at the tiny, unpretentious house where that great intellect first appeared, we found its occupant, a pleasant, buxom woman, taking tea with her young family in one of the two nine-feet-square rooms on either side of the narrow entry. Asking for some "Lipton's tea," she left the meal and served us in the opposite room—where the packages of tea were stacked in a glazed cupboard on the right of the small grate—afterwards willingly showing us the field at the back of the house—an expanse of ragged grass, perambulated by melancholy-looking, moulting fowls, whose "peep-peeps" were sadly appealing (the living they picked up was evidently unsatisfying), but which was the field where Sir Henry played as a toddling child.

When I asked to see the room where he was born, the custodian took me back to the tiny basement chamber where she sold the tea.

"What—*here?*" I incredulously exclaimed.

She somewhat mysteriously whispered that "It could not be helped." I asked no more. According to her, it was the two innkeepers, that of the very primitive old-world establishment opposite, and his crony, the man who that day was buried, who "really

knew what there was to know" of the great actor's origin. And they, both of them, were in their graves.

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We wandered to the church and churchyard. The churchyard was large, desolate, but by no means crowded. Although it boasted one or two fine monuments erected over the vaults of families who must long before have forsaken Keinton Mandeville, it had a wild, untended look. The church was, seemingly, being pulled to pieces and rebuilt. The interior looked almost dangerous, with its piles of seats, scaffolding, ladders, and platforms. A list of contributors of both large and small sums towards the restoration included a magnificent donation from the man who, born in the vicinity of that modest country church, now rests in the chief Abbey of Great Britain.

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During my stay in Somerset I wrote between nine and eleven novels, my favourites among them having been published by Mr. John Long. (In confidence: I have already freely unbosomed myself to the public, so I may as well, as they say, "do the thing handsomely," and confess that the only novel I have written which I really feel to be part of myself is *The Temptation of Anthony*.)

How have I written novels? In the first instance, they flash into my mind, complete, full-born, as many stories did, simultaneously, during the short drive from the Strand to Regent's Park Terrace, after my

important first interview with the late, deeply-to-be-mourned Mr. William Stevens.

Then I have only to sit down, paper before me, pen in hand, and plunge into my newly arrived other world. The beings who have sought me to give them a life, such as it is, for readers to know them, perform their parts, speak, act—and beyond their speech and action I see their feelings, thoughts, motives. More—I know their whole lives, with all the bearings of those lives, with all the different entities which have influenced them from first to last.

This may be called the "fiction-faculty." With it we have our flow of more or less delightful romances from a perfect multitude of pens. Were it suddenly to cease we should have no plays, no novels, no stories—in fact, no mind-recreations whatever.

I have known—once—the partial privation of the faculty. It was when I was writing *Dr. Paull's Theory* in the little Surrey country-house. I would sit down to my work, each day, expecting my *dramatis personæ* as usual. But, what did I see? A blank! It was as if I were seated in the auditorium to witness a play—but the curtain never rose.

I have no more to say. Suffering a temporary suspension of fictional faculty, because circumstances brought me to a London street, where noise blatantly blared from the first dawn to the latest darkness, I have jotted down my life. Memory can work in a horrible mental atmosphere in which imagination dies a sudden absolute death.

Truly I have known vicissitudes and agonies of dread lest the meanest daily bread of those dependent

upon me should fail. But never have I found lacking the generous friendship of women more fortunate in worldly possessions than myself.

It is natural that while man, when plunged in the deeps of earthly torture, should confide in man, woman should confide in woman. Many women have taken my hand and led me tenderly along the drear path where I was vainly stumbling. Notable among these is a lady who lives in Sydenham—one whom many have good reason to bless and pray for. To name her would be an outrage to her noble soul, so I desist.

Farewell, my kindly readers—perhaps for always. Looking ahead, I see a dense black mist. It comes nearer every hour . . . and I know, I feel, that in it lurk pain, poverty, disease, death.

Meanwhile, above and beyond shines that Eternal Sun whose faintest ray makes broad day of the blackest night.

In a flying visit to the beautiful little town of Dinant, on the banks of the flowing Meuse, I made a brief confession, kneeling at the old oak confessional in the ancient stone church, which rears itself against a huge, precipitous rock, to an aged priest who had attracted me by his stern, uncompromising denunciation of all but the strait and narrow road in his scantily attended sermons. I said but little—he replied but little—but, so forcible, so powerful, were his few words, that their unction remains with me still.

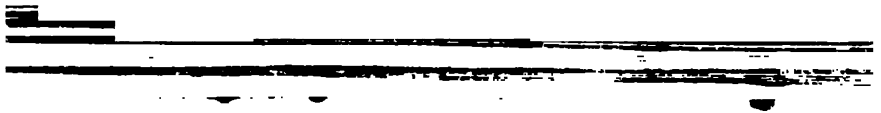
"*Courage, mon enfant,*" he said to me. "*Toujours courage . . . et encore du courage!*"

Yes, that one thing is all we want from our first moment on this planet to our last—*courage.*

What matters suffering, when it must have an end? Daily, my soul says, encouragingly, to its ageing companion, my poor body, quoting the immortal *Psalm of Life*—

> Let us then be up and doing
> With a heart for any fate;
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to labour—*and to wait.*

THE END.



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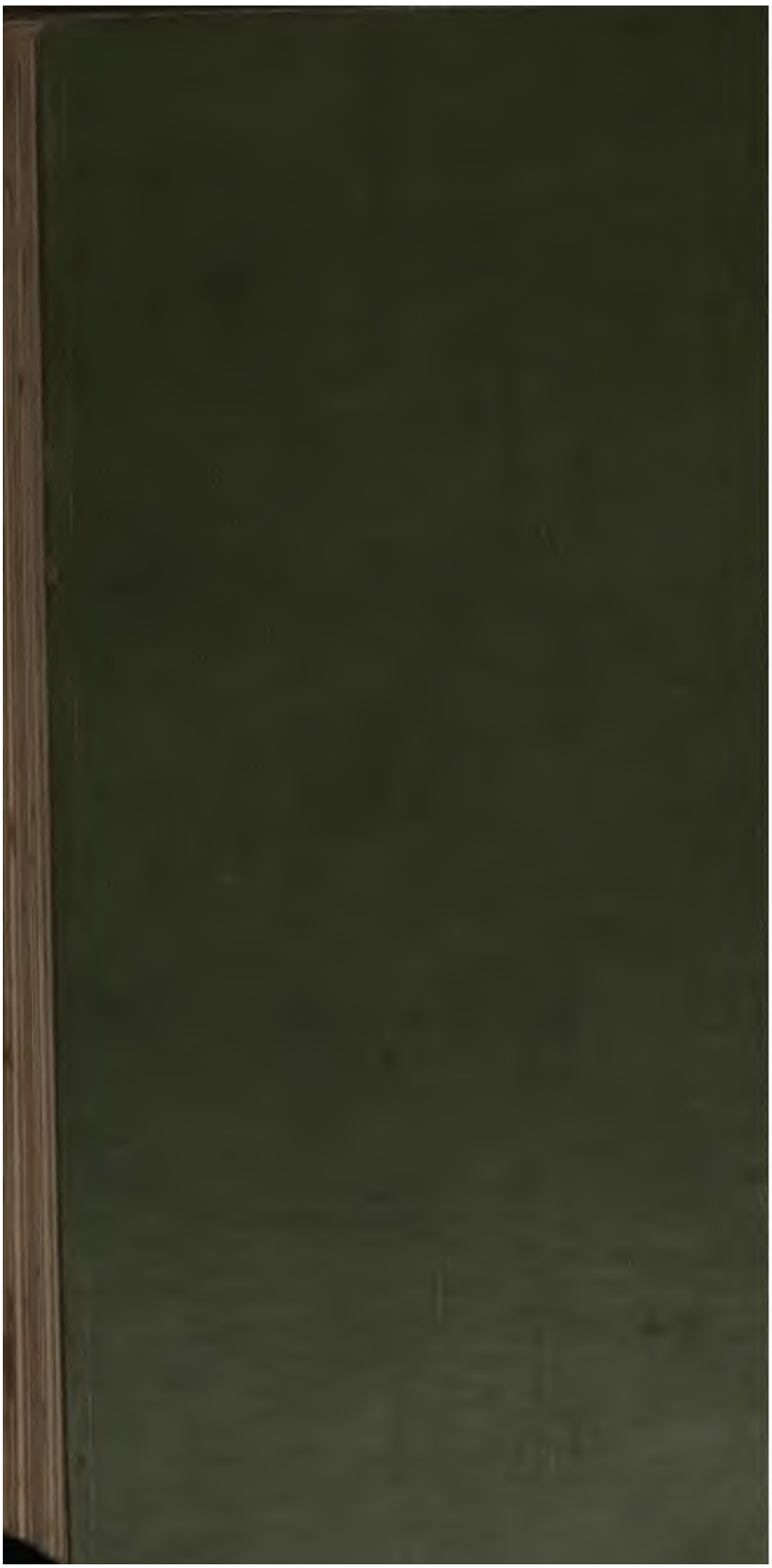
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